

THE JOURNAL
OF FUN
AND GAMES

GAMES

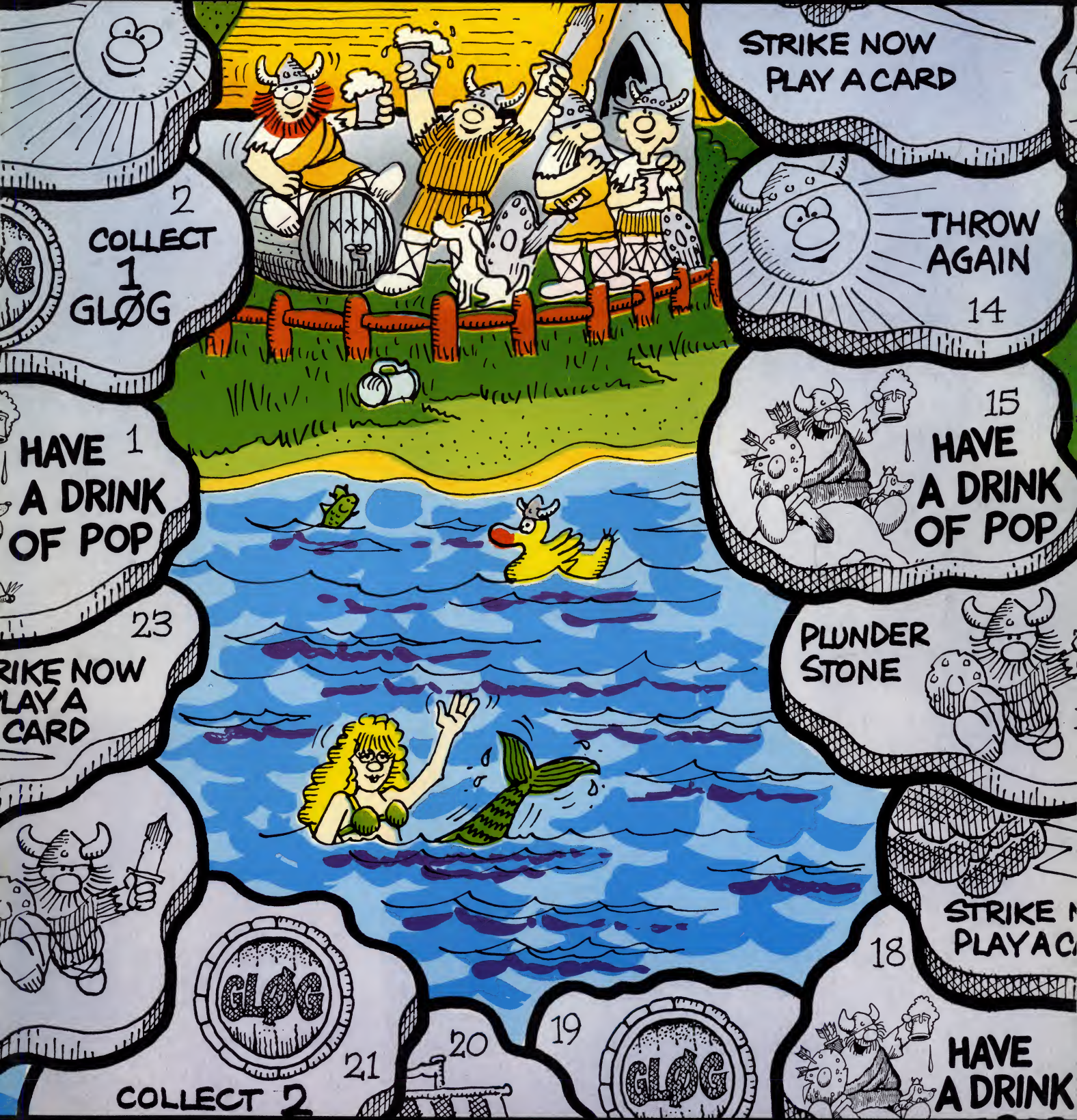
INTERNATIONAL

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STRIKE NOW
PLAY A CARD

THROW
AGAIN

14

15
HAVE
A DRINK
OF POP

PLUNDER
STONE

STRIKE N
PLAY A C

18

HAVE
A DRINK

2
COLLECT
1
GLÖG

HAVE 1
A DRINK
OF POP

23

STRIKE NOW
LAY A
CARD

COLLECT 2

21

20

19

IN THIS ISSUE:

Air Wars - a definitive guide; Empire Builder - new expansion kit; Risk! - the nuclear option

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UPFRONT

I PLAY THEREFORE, ER . . .

There can be few more frivolous activities in life than playing games, except perhaps writing about them. Maybe that's why, when I am asked what I do, my reply usually causes the inquisitor such bewilderment. A look that says 'Ah yes, but what's your *real* job?'

Out of politeness they then usually ask me what the 'next big thing' will be. Before I have chance to reply: 'How the hell should I know?' they've usually taken off like a leopard on roller skates. The thought that most forms of endeavour are ultimately futile never seems to cross their so-called minds. If it did, then of course playing games could be seen to be the logical outcome of such a philosophy. A rational response to a meaningless world. So next time you wonder whether you really were put on this earth to stage a cardboard invasion of Poland, just roll the dice. It's really okay.

BIG THINGS

So what *will* be the next big thing? Recently we received what looked like one half of a skipping rope. The accompanying blurb assured us that soon, anyone who is worth knowing would be twirling the thing around like a yuppie in a dervish spin. Without wishing to sound unduly pessimistic, quite frankly, we doubt it. These are desperate times. Everybody's looking for the next bandwagon to hop onto now that the trivia train has hit the buffers, and the 'ice breakers', well, didn't.

What does seem sure is that the day of the £20 plus (mass market) game is over. If

Next issue:

ORIGINS

GI visits LA for photos, reports and interviews with the stars.

HEROQUEST SPECIAL

Interview with Stephen Baker of MB, and review of the game.

HOLY BATPRODUCTS

A film, a DC hero, and now a game. The hype starts here.

SHADOW WORLD


Twilit fantasy from ICE reviewed.

indeed, apart from *Trivial Pursuit* it ever existed. As to the answer of our opening question, we'll keep you posted.

GREENS INTERNATIONAL

Although seldom venturing into it, we at *Games International* have as much respect for the environment as anyone else. And if the result of the recent European elections are anything to go by, so do many of you. This is by way of an explanation for the ad on page 25 which we gave to Greenpeace free of charge. Just in case you thought it was some kind of new game.

We'd like to do more of the same for similar non (party) political organisations but unfortunately such altruism doesn't pay the rent, so we need your help: for every subscription we receive in the following month we will donate £1 to the Greenpeace fund. Your response will determine whether or not we repeat the experiment.

Don't miss out on this rare opportunity to support a games magazine *and* save the planet. If only whales could read. 

REVIEW SECTION

In Fleet St (RIP), they call it the silly season. That time of the year when nothing happens other than Rotweillers running around biting anything that moves. But, 'when there's no news, go out and make your own', to quote one of the maxims of the world's least loved profession. And so we did, unlike some games magazines.


Rather than trawl through the past in the sort of coma-inducing prose that no self respecting dentist would want to see in his waiting room, we dispatched 'Sumo' Siggins off to Germany to give you an idea of the way conventions work there. John Harrington went to Wales and discovered murder in the first degree, while Chris Hunt got the glamorous assignment of a trip to Milton Keynes for Campaign '89. In the midst of all this Lee Brimmicombe-Wood (he even sounds like a pilot) presented us with a definitive look at air warfare games.

Darwin Bromley of Mayfair Games offered us the opportunity to be the first mag to publish the Mexican expansion kit for *Empire Builder*. How could we refuse? Let's hope it persuades more of you to invest in this excellent game. In the Rolegame section, our potted history of Japan draws to a close with a list of recommended Japanese films, kindly supplied by Dave Morris, to help you get in the mood. Sayonara.

OBITUARY

Jeux et Strategie 1979-1989

It is with great sadness that we have to report the demise of the French games magazine, *Jeux et Strategie*, which sank with all hands on Thursday June 16. At its peak the circulation topped 100 000. The glossy mix covering all types of games proved popular initially. Unfortunately, this format probably led to its ultimate downfall as more and more specialist magazines began to nibble away at the readership. Most notably, its own offspring *Casus Belli*, produced on the floor below, by the same Excelsior Publications.

The writing was on the wall in January this year, when, in a bid to stem the flow of departing readers, the mag went monthly (it was formerly bi-monthly) and reduced the cover price. All, as it turned out, to no avail. Our sympathies to the journalists and production staff who lost their jobs. May their *vacances involontaire* be short. 

The more astute among you will have noticed there is no Game of the Month this issue. Ponder on the wisdom of having a restaurant of the month during a famine.

Star Ratings

Top class game. Highly recommended

Very good game. Worth buying

Worth a look

**

Only if the subject interests you

*

A true turkey

REVIEWS

GENERAL GAMES

SHARE MANIA

DESIGNED BY
JULIAN MUSGRAVEPUBLISHED BY
PERFECT GAMES

PRICE £6.99



Ten years of the Thatcher government's campaign to create a share owning democracy has obviously convinced some British companies that stock market games are, in City parlance, 'sexy'. Few, if any, of the games have captured the British public's imagination. Perhaps the best way to do so would be to market a game called 'Privatisation', sell it at £10 a throw and offer to buy it back the next day at £15.

The latest game to come along and try to entice the British family into wearing stripy shirts and red braces is *Share Mania*, a dice and trading game from Perfect Games. *Share Mania* comes in a small box and contains eight pencils, several pads of record sheets for recording trades, five large chunky dice designed to crack glass table tops, four different coloured pawns with which to record share price movements, and a board on which to place them.

My first impressions were that someone had been cutting corners on this game.

The dice, for instance, although twice the size and weight of the average gob stopper, were blank. Stickers are stuck on the faces of the dice in the best tradition of *Blue Peter*. One wonders how much battering the dice could take before the stickers begin to peel off. Then there is the trading board, which is colourful enough but which really should have been a peg board. I have too many baggy jumpers in my wardrobe to safely be invited to play this game, where the pawns can easily be knocked over by a dragging sleeve.

The rules are commendably brief for what is, after all, intended to be a bright and breezy game, but there are some areas of confusion, particularly over the difference between a 'round' and a 'trading period'. As ever, common sense will resolve most issues.

Two to eight players can play, although a two player game would lack a certain amount of cut and thrust. An average session should take an hour or two, depending on whether you play the basic game or the advanced game.

The basic game entails the use of only four of the five dice; the fifth being used to provide random events in the advanced game. Two of the dice are 'number dice' and two of them are 'company dice'. The number dice are numbered from 1 to 3; the company dice have on their faces the names of the four companies quoted in the game: Allied & Financial, Floyds, Eurocom and II. On his turn a player rolls the four dice and buys or sells shares in those companies which come up on the company dice. The quantity of shares he can buy or sell is determined by the num-

ber dice, as well as the amount of cash he has available and also, if he wishes to sell, whether he has the shares to sell.

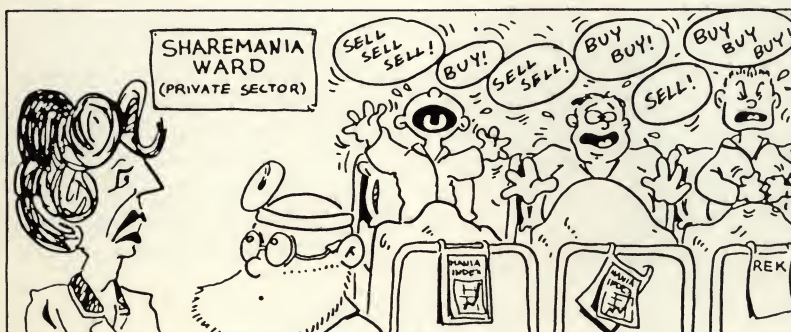
So, for instance, a player might roll 1 and 3 on the number dice and Eurocom and Floyds on the company dice. He could buy one Floyds and sell three Eurocom, or buy one Floyds and buy another three Floyds, or sell three Floyds and ignore the 1 he rolled on the number dice, and so on. What he can't do on that turn is buy or sell two shares (as he didn't roll a 2) or trade in II or Allied & Financial.

Each player buys or sells shares at the prevailing market price, but after he has traded, the price of the shares he dealt in are adjusted. Share prices move up one for every share bought, and down one for every share sold. Shares cannot rise above 20 or below one.

Thus far we have a fairly simple game of luck. You buy cheap and sell dear and try to parlay your starting stake of £100 000 cash into a million pounds to win.

The advanced game introduces some 'seasoning' to spice up the proceedings. The rules in the advanced game are optional but I strongly recommend that all the rules be introduced as soon as you feel comfortable with the mechanics of the game. In particular, the rule which allows players to trade amongst themselves without going through the market (that is, without rolling the dice) provides some much needed interaction.

The fifth die, known as the 'market die', may be used in the advanced game to introduce a random element. At the end of each round a player throws the market die, and this will either affect a particular company (randomly decided) or some, all or none of the shareholders. For instance, a company's share price may be boosted by good results or depressed by bad results. Shareholders might see their holdings in a company doubled through a scrip issue or their cash reserves devastated by Advanced Corporation Tax (ACT). Alternatively, the dice might call for all loans to be repaid, which is particularly bad news for those traders who have 'gone long' (bought stock with money



they do not have). Should a player not have sufficient funds to repay his loans then he must raise money by dumping his shares on the market at half price or by persuading another trader to buy shares from him.

Just as there is the option to 'go long', so it is also possible to 'go short' (sell shares you do not own), although this process is misleadingly referred to as 'Put Options' in the rules, which suggests that the designer has either skimmed on his research or does not know as much about the stock market as he thinks he does. Players must cover their short positions by the end of the 'account'; the account ends every fourth round.

The introduction of these risky strategies allow a player to go for the big money, but also give the other players the opportunity to put the squeeze on a trader who over extends himself. In an eight player game it is quite possible for you to sell shares you don't own at, say, 14, in the hope of buying them back at a lower price – only to see your fellow players take every opportunity to send the share price moon-bound and force you to buy them back at twenty. Then again, if the dice will not run for you, you might not get the chance to buy the shares back anyway, and you might end up paying another player a ridiculous price for the shares to avoid being suspended for a full account by the Stock Exchange Commission, who

take a dim view of this sort of thing. It is surprising how often the dice prevent you from buying the stock you want when you are really desperate.

Some of these niceties may be lost on those lucky people who are not *au fait* with City practices, but they are well worth getting to grips with as they do transform this rather simplistic dice game into what the box promises: a 'fast, fun, backstabbing Game of Stockmarket Dealing!'.

John Harrington

THE REALLY NASTY HORSE RACING GAME

DESIGNED BY
JOHN MARIANI, SIMON
KNOCK & TOM WHITE

PUBLISHED BY
UPSTARTS

PRICE £34.95



THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING AESTHETIC

When asked for advice by the townsfolk of Griggsville, Kansas, as to how they might improve their aesthetic outlook, Oscar Wilde replied: 'Start by changing the name of your town'. If asked a simi-

lar question by the makers of this product, the old wag would have probably paraphrased himself and answered: 'Start by changing the name of your game'. It really is an unwieldy mouthful. But if you've just shelled out close on thirty five quid your main concern would probably be, does it play well? Well, does it? In a field of six runners I'd probably place it about third. A few lengths behind **Win, Place and Show**, but a neck in front of **Totopoly**. If we're talking about looks though, this would definitely be in the winners enclosure. Hand painted horses of a considerable size, a stand-up betting board, and top quality game board. There's even six pencils included.

THEY'RE OFF

The game consists of 6 races for which there is varying prize money. Each player has six horses of 'varying ability'. At the outset you choose which horse you are going to enter in each race. You may bet unlimited amounts of cash on any horse. At the commencement of each race the starting lanes are randomly determined. The ability of the horse is now cross referenced with the lane to determine the

odds. Movement consists of rolling a die and moving accordingly though you may switch lanes to the outside to block another horse. In doing so you will also slow down your own nag for the outer lanes are considerably longer, not that this matters too much if you've

bet on another horse. If you roll a 6 you may move towards the inner rail. There are also specially marked spaces where certain horses (according to their ranking) may move double the amount thrown when they land upon such a space. There are more such spaces for your number one horse, less for your number two, and so on. Finally, there are special cards which each player receives at the start of the game. These do things like causing a horse to fall when they are on a particular fence; remount when you do fall; have a free bet, and so on. Once played they are gone for good.

TOP RANKING

The ranking of horses is somewhat overvalued. Even if you do land upon a 'double' space, it is little use unless you have a 3 or more. Far more important are the starting lanes. In practice though, there is no substitute for rolling sixes, irrespective of where you land. This brings us to the game's greatest flaw: the movement system, which is simply too basic and spoils otherwise good ideas. The betting system, for example, is quite clever, though again the ranking of the horses plays too great a part. The bookmaker, 'Generous George' fully lives up to his name with his odds. Such a man would be besieged by punters unable to believe their luck should he ever turn up at the track with such offerings. Undoubtedly, **The Really Nasty Horse Racing Game** (gulp!), needs a few tweaks to turn it into something special. The components are a considerable inspiration and there are enough ideas in the game already to ensure such a task should not be hard work. Undemanding families will no doubt enjoy it as it is, and for collectors, well, this will definitely go on top of the heap.

Brian Walker



THE GREAT KHAN GAME

DESIGNED BY
TOM WHAM & RICHARD
HAMBLÉN

PUBLISHED BY
TSR

PRICE £8.95



The Great Khan Game is designer Tom Wham's second release in TSR's low price 'Gamefolio' series, after the excellent *Mertwig's Maze* (reviewed in issue 2). Forgive me if I ignore the game for a moment and look at the packaging.

The Great Khan Game is the first Gamefolio to come in a box. It contains 164 cards (perforated, not die-cut), 120 counters and a very tacky paper game map. It costs £8.95. Compare this to *Mertwig's Maze*, which had 190 cards, 100 counters and a total of nine maps, but no box. It cost £5.95. Can the extra packaging costs of a box really account for £3? Or perhaps the price hike has more to do with the '2nd Edition AD&D' and 'Forgotten Realms' logos which are both

prominent on the front of the box: both proven money-spinners for TSR; neither of them have anything to do with *The Great Khan Game*.

At the heart of *The Great Khan Game* is a nice idea: a complex variant of 'Happy Families' using countries, political coups and military invasions in order to take control of as much of the Whamite Isles as possible. The board is almost peripheral to the main action of the game, which centres on the cards. These are of three types: Event Cards, Nation Cards and Special Cards. Players 'meld' countries from the Nation cards subject to various conditions. If someone reckons that the cards in their hand will form a better government for a particular country than the existing one, they are free to challenge with a political coup, or invade from another country with a military force.

This is a very simple and playable idea, but the designers seem to have wanted to expand it into a wargame. This shows up worst in the military combat system, in which there are modifiers for almost everything – how many castles the defenders have, the route the attackers took to get to the country and so forth. Each combat round has eight separate steps. In an almost abstract card game, with a combat system worked out from the roll of a single ordinary die, this is frankly daft.

There are other unnecessary twiddly bits which obstruct the game rather than adding to it: mercenaries, pirates, bandits, magic, merchant trains and so forth. The designers have tried to put a financial slant on the game, to the extent that the winner is the player with the most gold at the end of the game; yet it seems to put the emphasis of the game in the wrong place.

The Great Khan Game is, as it stands, playable and perhaps enjoyable, but without question has a number of overcomplex and unnecessary elements. After attempting to play it in this form I have already rewritten the rules to simplify the combat system and exclude the elements of gold and the game map, which produces a much faster and simpler game, more immediately understandable for new players and with fewer awkward twiddly rules to remember. By all means buy *The Great Khan Game*, especially if you're willing to do some work to unearth the good game that lies beneath, but as it stands I cannot recommend it.

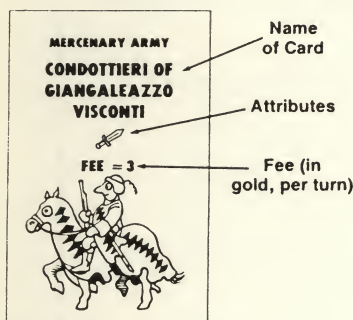
James Wallis

CHARTS

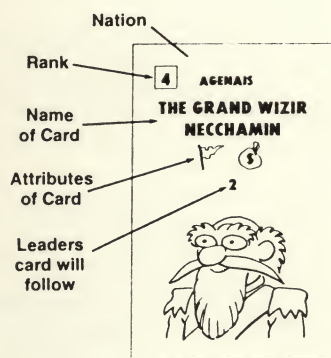
General Games

- 1 Pass The Pigs (Milton Bradley)
- 2 Scrabble (Spears)
- 3 Pole Position (Platnik)
- 4 Der Ausreisser (F X Schmid)
- 5 Hol's Der Geler (Ravensburger)
- 6 Pictionary (Kenner Parker Tonka)
- 7 Monopoly (Waddingtons)
- 8 Oppression (Midson)
- 9 Trivial Pursuit (Kenner Parker Tonka)
- 10 Classic Backgammon

Chart supplied by Just Games.



SAMPLE MERCENARY CARD



SAMPLE NATION CARD

... EVERY GENERATION HAS A MESSAGE
... EVERY PEOPLE HAS A STORY
... EVERY NATION HAS A HISTORY
BUT NO NATION IN HISTORY HAS INFLICTED MORE PAIN, TORTURE AND HARDSHIP ON A PEOPLE THAN THE WHITE BOER TRIBE OF AFRICA. . . .
ALL BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT OF THEIR KIND.
PLAY

OPPRESSION[®]
THE GAME

OPPRESSION

DESIGNED BY
ISHMAIL DARSOT

PUBLISHED BY
MIDSON HOLDINGS

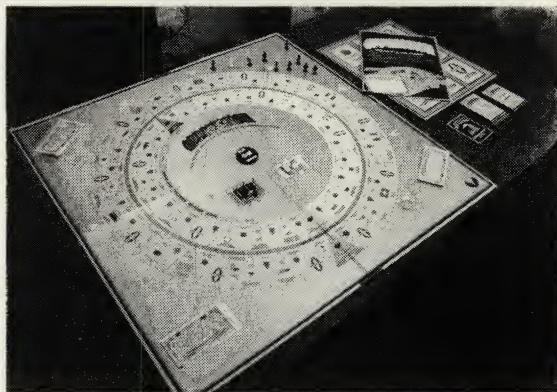
PRICE £29.95



Let's come clean; when it comes to South Africa, we would support to the hilt virtually anything which would result in the collapse of that heinous regime. But a game? A useful propaganda tool, or the trivialisation of a human tragedy? Given the subject matter on hand, these are questions which are impossible to ignore, though the answers can only be subjective. Personally I had problems with this. The same sort of problems I would have had with playing *Platoon* had it been published while the (Vietnam) war was still raging. It should be said though, that *Oppression* was produced by a South African coloured (their terminology). Does this make a difference? Who knows? So let's stop this liberal pussyfooting and get on with the game.

Each player starts off white and does a circuit of the board, during which he tries to acquire property and assets by landing on them. Subsequently, you may purchase labourers to work your property. They increase the value, so anybody (except the owner) landing on such a space has to pay an extra 'fine'. An extraordinary thing happens when you throw a double: you, or one of your opponents, changes colour. Or at least this is *one* of the options you are presented with. You may reclassify any player as White, Indian, or Coloured. When you discover you are of a different hue than hitherto suspected, you must give up one property for which you will only get 25% compensation. This is one of just many rules which mirror the situation in South Africa with depressing accuracy.

You may think the game system is a simple *Monopoly* clone, but compared to some of that ilk, it is far removed. The options presented when throwing a double offer the player a wide range of choices and prevent the game simply becoming a procession (something which often happens in *Monopoly*), and if there is a skill



element in the game, then this is it. Elsewhere, the appalling iniquities of life in SA are welded onto the game system with remarkable ease: land can be expropriated; banishment to Robben Island (hullo, Nelson Mandela) is possible on the roll of a die; UN sanctions can be applied which means whites get no income (perhaps the only unrealistic rule), and so on. As the cover of our last issue bore testament to, the game is beautifully produced. A high quality board, lots of plastic miniatures, good card stock.

You've seen the pictures, you've now read the description. As the cover of the rule book states: 'WARNING! You may find this game to be offensive'. Well, do you?

Brian Walker

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MURDER!

The big heap

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF INSPECTOR JOHN WARSFIELD:

I was sitting in my office dealing with some traffic violations when Bert Spike, the Yard's internal messenger, came in to deliver the post. We had a chat about Spurs' survival prospects in the First Division. It was a short conversation. When he had gone I picked up the envelope he had left.

Inside was a letter from Dirk Caldwell, the almost famous explorer and adventurer. It was the second letter I had received from the man who almost conquered Everest - and I ain't talking about double glazing here. The first had come about a month ago, and had explained a little of his life history and, more importantly, the curious developments within his family.

Dirk Caldwell's father was J J Caldwell. You've probably heard of him; he owns half of Wales, and the half he doesn't own isn't worth owning. According to the letters Dirk had been receiving from J J, the old man was getting paranoid about the possibility of someone in the family fixing to knock him off.

As the old wisdom has it, just because you are paranoid doesn't mean they aren't out to get you. By the time the second missive arrived J J Caldwell was indeed dead. He'd keeled over shortly after a dinner party. Everyone assumed it was a heart attack. Everyone except me and the killer.

Given the warning I had previously received from Dirk I had already ordered a secret autopsy and discovered J J had been poisoned. Now, with my research on the likely suspects complete, I was getting ready to don my hat and coat and introduce myself to the Caldwell family in my official capacity as Inspector John Warsfield.

Dirk Caldwell's latest letter told of his mounting anxiety over his grandfather's welfare, and contained the suggestion that I attend a family gathering posing as him in order to find out what was going on. Well, the old man was already dead, but there was a reading of the will coming up and so I decided to act on Dirk's suggestion. No one in Dirk's family had seen him for twenty years since he had run away to sea at the age of 12, so there was little enough danger of my deception being found out. I knew enough of Dirk's adventures in the Antarctic, Borneo and the Himalayas to bluff my way through and so I proceeded to Roch castle, dressed in my best explorer's outfit.

*John Harrington has been involved in some nefarious goings-on. Here, with a little help from the memoirs of Inspector John Warsfield of Scotland Yard, he comes clean about the Partyzone host-a-murder game, **The Inheritance**.*

In the first month of May, I went with eight friends to stay in a castle in Pembrokeshire in Wales for a week's holiday. With its secret corridors, dungeons, baronial dining hall and imposing battlements, the castle seemed an eminently suitable venue for us to try out one of the numerous 'Murder Mystery Role-playing Party' games on the market. The one we chose, largely on the basis of its cheapness, was **The Inheritance**, part of the Partyzone series from TSR.

Our host (in other words the person who bought the game) sent us some smart invitation cards about two weeks before the 'party'. The invitation cards are provided with the game but are not reusable. However, you can order new ones from TSR should you want to run the same 'mystery' more than once.

We also received some background details relating to the scenario and a few pointers to how the game should be played. These notes were typed by our host but most of the information he provided was gleaned from the 'Host Booklet and Party Planner' file. This booklet runs to only eight pages, and three of these are taken up with recipes for crab dip, bean dip and rum balls, plus forms for a shopping list and a guest list.

Aside from these highly useful tips on how to run a successful party (no mention of the 32 crates of Pils which are usually *de rigueur* at any party I throw) the booklet contains an explanation of how to play the game. Sections are divided into: What

is the 'Inheritance' package? Setting Up, Starting the Game, Assigning the Characters, What You Do As Host and Winners and Losers.

The rules are sparse but adequate. Seasoned role-players would certainly have no problem getting to grips with them, but the rules might prove a little too open-ended for those people who have little experience of playing games. It is the responsibility of the host to make on-the-spot rulings and generally push proceedings along in such a manner that the players forget about the rules and concentrate on the role-playing.

Briefing

I didn't know full details of the character I was playing until I got to the castle, otherwise I would have bought an Indiana Jones trilby and a bullwhip. My host gave me a folder at my private briefing and this contained details on Jonathon Jerome (J J) Caldwell, the manner of his death as well as information on who I was, what my alibi was and various other bits and bobs with which to flesh out my character.

Having been briefed I adjourned to my bed chamber and got dressed for the party. I borrowed some hair mousse and an eyebrow pencil and slicked back my hair and drew on a Ronald Colman moustache. I did not look much like Indiana Jones - more like Vinnie Jones, actually - but I made the effort. At least I didn't look like a policeman - but then I'm only 5'4", and apart from Norman Wisdom coppers don't come that small.

Props

The portrait of J J Caldwell and the family tree were part of the game components. Another nice touch was a card, made up to look like a brass plate, which read:

CALDWELL MANSION
The Reading of the Will Is
Scheduled for
Admittance restricted to family
members and counsel.

The family tree contained some potted biographies of the characters, and from these it was reasonably evident that they divided into two types: suspects and sleuths. The sleuths had no apparent motive for killing J J and therefore, I deduced, they were there to solve the crime. However, mystery fiction thrives on deviousness and deception and during the course of the evening as skeletons popped out of closets with all the remor-

I arrived early so as to size up the suspects over cocktails. A portrait of J J looked down grimly on the proceedings from the lounge wall. On the opposite wall was a diagram of the family tree, and I took the trouble to give it the once over.

J J Caldwell had four children: Cassandra, Richard, Thaddeus and Ursula. Cassandra I knew by repute as one of the country's top doctors. I found this interesting, as she would certainly have access to Barbitol - the drug which had brought on J J's death. Richard was the eldest son and, I was to learn, the black sheep of the family. He had left home at nineteen, leaving one of the maids with child, and had returned to the roost only weeks before J J had died. Thaddeus Caldwell had benefited most from Richard's estrangement from J J's affections. Thaddeus it was who had assumed Richard's rightful place as Chief Executive of Caldwell Industries. Ursula was about the only one of J J's offspring I did not suspect. She was one of that rare breed: a journalist who commanded respect.

The grandchildren were an equally suspicious bunch. Included among their number were a manic-depressive, a film starlet, a drunk and a detective fiction writer. The writer was likely to cause me a lot of trouble, not just because he was Dirk's brother and therefore capable of exposing me as an impostor, but also because he looked the sort who fancied himself as an amateur sleuth, the sort that runs rings around the police. I made up my mind that if he started pulling any of that Sherlock Holmes stuff I would consign him to the dungeon while I completed my investigation.

At 8pm we adjourned to the hall on the ground floor to hear the reading of the will. The will was read by Ursula, the most trusted member of the family, and written, apparently, by Ted Rogers. It sounded like one of those confounded puzzles you get on 3-2-1 and my initial impression of Jonathon Jerome Caldwell as a hard-nosed businessman took a bit of a knock.

Surely the will was a fake! Either that or J J Caldwell had not died from an overdose of Barbitol at all, but from a surfeit of dreadful Agatha Christie novels.

Old J J's will threw accusations around with all the gay abandon of a particularly reckless edition of *Private Eye*. One of our number, it seemed, was a thief, a blackmailer, an impostor or worse! Or maybe there was one thief, one blackmailer and one impostor. I checked my invitation card again to make sure that the name of this family was Caldwell and not Borgia.

The will gave me a headache. There was no way that J J could have known that I was going to turn up for his will posing as Dirk Caldwell, so who was the impostor if not me? Who was the thief? Was the blackmailer blackmailing the thief? What time was dinner? What is the capital of Ethiopia? Why do people play Trivial Pursuit?

Dinner was at 9pm, so that was one question answered already. Now if only I could find the answers to the others. I tried my best to get everyone talking by refilling their wine glasses at every opportunity, but instead of getting answers I got more questions.

What had Richard and J J argued about shortly before the old man's death? Why was Thaddeus mystified at the source of his daughter's income? Why did the conversation go quiet every time someone mentioned Thaddeus's limp? What did the film starlet Missy Malone see in the drunken Steven, except perhaps a convenient alibi for her movements on the night of the murder?

By the end of the dinner, and the end of a few wine bottles, the old family arguments were given an airing. James the butler cleared the table, but he must have left the cutlery behind because the knives were well and truly out. Accusations were made and subjects changed with all the adroitness of seasoned politicians.

Suddenly Norman Caldwell turned the spotlight on me and demanded to know where I had been on the night of J J's death. I replied that I had been aboard a ship bound for Southampton. Norman was not satisfied by this reply and asked me why I had not flown home for the reading of the will. I could hardly claim that I, Dirk Caldwell, the great adventurer, was afraid of aeroplanes.

While I tried to splutter out a convincing reply Norman challenged me directly to prove I was in fact Dirk Caldwell. To test me he asked me a question about something he and Dirk had done together in their childhood. Not having been briefed on this I decided to come clean.

'Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to introduce myself, properly this time. My name is Inspector

John Warsfield' - I flashed them my warrant card - 'and it is my sad duty to inform you that someone in this room is a murderer!' What the hell, I thought. If J J is going to go in for melodramatic wills, I might as well carry on the cliché.

We repaired to the lounge like the civilised and slightly eccentric English people we were, to discuss just who the murderer was. I let them have their fun trying out their pet theories before carefully removing the gun from my pocket and pointing it at Richard Caldwell, eldest son of Jerome Jonathon Caldwell. Years in the force has taught me to be very suspicious of coincidences, and his reappearance shortly before J J's death was a coincidence. I didn't buy his story about being a successful businessman in his own right. I reckoned he had fallen down on his uppers and come to touch his father for a loan. The old man had turned him down flat and Richard, anxious to get his share of the old man's fortune, had killed him and tried to throw suspicion on his sister, Doctor Cassandra Caldwell.

With my gun pointed unwaveringly at his stomach, which was now an even bigger target after the sumptuous meal we had just eaten, I said: 'Richard Caldwell, I arrest you for the murder of Jerome Caldwell. I must warn you that anything you say may be taken down and printed in Games International.'

seless consistency of a John Carpenter movie, everyone would get their turn as prime suspect. Even me.

Clichés

At times the game threw in a few too many detective fiction clichés, and the enigmatic will, written by a paranoid pill-lock, was a dreadful plot device that was as obvious as a foreskin in a Jewish sauna.

The warrant card, by the way, was not provided by the game. Our host had taken it upon himself to provide a number of props himself, including a container of Barbitol tablets (blue smarties), a cap gun and a walking stick for Thaddeus.

The solution

Was I right? I'm not going to say. At the end of the evening everyone was invited to write down as much or as little as they wished about their suspicions. In as much as a rolegame has winners or losers, this was how they were decided. In addition, each player's character file set an objective which usually consisted of the player keeping his or her own secrets concealed and finding out about someone else's.

Despite the hackneyed plot and several inconsistencies, the game provided a full and unusual evening's entertainment. There were more than enough hidden secrets to discover to maintain interest, but the success of the game is of course dependent on the players entering into the spirit of the game. Some of the players who were not used to role-playing games said the rules could have laid down a few more guidelines as to expected behaviour, particularly in the area of lying about information on one's character file.

The other major drawback of the game is the requirement for five couples, which is somewhat limiting for those of us who like to throw parties for rather more people, or those of us who have difficulty persuading one woman - let alone five - to come to our parties. Yet, as this sort of game is aimed at the same sort of people who buy *Trivial Pursuit*, it should not be too great a problem and will make a pleasant change from those formal dinner parties which always seem to be interrupted by some drip knocking on your door asking to borrow a jar of Gold Blend. G

The Inheritance is a Partyzone game published by TSR.

John Harrington is the editor of the fanzine *Take That You Fiend*, but is otherwise quite normal.

CARD GAMES

Indiscretion

Five games to go with Piatnik's Indiscretion cards on which the suits held are visible to the other players.

Faculty

An indiscreet card game for two or more players (three is best) by David Parlett

Deal six cards face down to each player and one face up to the table. If it is an Ace or a King, bury it and turn the next one up instead. Stack the rest face down on one side.

The aim is to go out first by playing all one's cards to a sequence following the turn-up.

Each in turn passes or adds a card to the sequence. The card played must be either

higher in rank and different in suit from the previous card,

or
lower in rank and of the same suit as the previous one.

Ace counts low or high. (If it matches the previous suit it is low and must be followed by any card of a different suit. If different, it is high and must be followed by any card of its own suit.)

Play ceases when somebody wins by playing their last card. The winner scores the total value of cards remaining in the others' hands, counting each Ace 11, picture 10, others at face value.

It is permissible to pass when able to play, but if everyone passes then the next person able to add to the sequence must do so. If no-one can continue the sequence, the player of the last card is the *loser* and scores nothing. Everyone else then scores the value of the loser's hand.

Play up to 100 points.

Trickster

An indiscreet card game for two to four players, by David Parlett

Players are dealt thirteen cards each, discard three face down, and play the other ten to tricks. Each player's aim is to win exactly the number of tricks indicated in code by the suits of his three discards.

For this purpose, each club discarded counts 3 tricks

each heart discarded counts 2 tricks

each spade discarded counts 1 trick

each diamond discarded counts zero tricks

Example - you can bid three by discarding three spades (1+1+1), or

heart, spade and diamond (2+1+0), or a club and two diamonds (3+0+0).

Play

Eldest hand leads to the first trick, and the winner of each trick leads to the next. Cards rank in their natural order from Ace high to Two low.

Players must follow suit to the card led if possible, otherwise they may play any card. There is no trump. A trick is won by the highest card played to it, regardless of suit. Of equally high cards, the first played counts highest.

Score

Each player scores one point per trick taken.

In addition, anyone who succeeded in taking exactly the number of tricks they bid scores a bonus of 10, plus 10 points per player who failed to do so.

Example - of four players, A bid three and took three, B bid two and took two, C bid five and took two, D bid two and took three. A scores 33, B scores 32, C scores two, D scores three.

Play up to 100 points.

Two players. If both succeed, a bonus of 10 goes to the player who reached his total first. For the second game, deal out all cards unused in the first.

Three players. The game is more skilful, and more fun, if the 13 cards left over after the deal are spread face up in a row so that everyone can see which ones are out of play.

Four players. Four may play in partnerships if preferred. Partners will naturally try to help each other to take the right number of tricks. The game ends when both members of either partnership have made 100 or more points each.

Showdown

An indiscreet card game for two, by David and Edward

Parlett

Deal eight cards each and stack the rest face down.

A 'trick' consists of three cards from each player. Non-dealer leads to the first trick and the loser of each one leads to the next.

The leader selects three cards from his hand and plays them face down to the table. They will naturally form one of three suit patterns: 1) all different, 2) two alike, or 3) three alike (flush).

The follower must then play, face down, three cards of the same suit pattern as the leader's (but not necessarily of exactly the same suits). If unable to match the leader's pattern he may play any three cards, but cannot win the trick.

The cards are then turned up. Whoever shows the best three-card combination wins the trick and stores all six cards face down in a pile. From highest to lowest, the combinations are:

- ① Triplet (A-A-A, 9-9-9)
- ② Sequence (A-K-Q, 9-8-7, 3-2-A)
- ③ Pair (A-A-x, 9-9-x)
- ④ None of the above.

Of like combinations, the one with the highest card wins. Ace counts high, except in a 3-2-A sequence. If equal, decide by the second highest card, or the third if necessary. If still equal, decide by the suit of the highest card: club beats heart beats spade beats diamond.

Each player in turn then draws cards from stock until his hand is restored to eight. The loser of a trick always draws first and leads to the next. When no cards remain in stock, two more hands are played without drawing. Each

player adds his last two unplayed cards to his face down pile of won cards.

Open hand

A player who is confident of winning the trick may play his cards immediately face up instead of down. Cards won face up are stored face up in a separate pile.

Lowdown

The leader to a trick may announce 'Lowdown!' before the other plays. In this case, the trick is *lost* by the person playing the highest hand. Lowdown may be played face up as described above.

Scoring

At end of play, cards won face down by each player score three per club, two per heart, one per spade, zero per diamond. Cards won face up score face value from Ace = 1 to Ten = 10, but Kings, Queens and Jacks count zero.

Jack the Ripper

An indiscreet game for two or four players, by David Parlett

Two players

Deal ten cards each and stack the rest face down.

Starting with the non-dealer, each in turn plays a card face up to the table (following suit, if possible) and announces the combined total of the cards so far played. These cards form a 'trick'. Its total value may not exceed 21. If a player can follow suit but cannot play without exceeding 21, he must pass, and his opponent wins the trick. The winner may then bring it up to exactly 21 if he can do so by adding just one more card of the same suit. A trick worth 21 is stored face up, any other face down.

Numerals count at face value from Ace 1 to Ten 10. A Queen always counts 0, and so does a Jack or King if led to a trick. In other positions a King *adds* the value of the last numeral played, and a Jack *subtracts* the value of the last numeral played.

The player in turn must play if the trick is worth less than 12, but may pass if it counts 12 or more. A player who has no cards left of the suit required may play any card, thus changing the suit to be followed. (It is therefore possible for one trick to undergo several suit changes.)

The winner of a trick leads to the next after both players have restored their hands to ten cards by drawing from stock.

When no cards remain in stock, play continues until one person plays their

last card. This wins the trick if it is worth 12 or more. If not, the opponent may win it by adding one more card and making it 12 or more.

Each player scores 5 per trick worth 21 (face up), plus 2 per trick worth 20 or less (face down), plus 1 per King, Queen, Jack taken in tricks.

The score is not affected by unplayed cards or an incomplete trick.

Four players

Players sitting opposite each other are partners and count their scores together. Deal 13 cards each. A trick is only won after three successive passes, and the player of the last card may (if possible) make it exactly 21 with one more card of the same suit.

R

I

P



Brian Walker

My colleague Alan R Moon recently described *Schoko & Co* as 'one of the best business games ever'. To be sure it is a fine game, but running it close must be *Trade*, designed by Rudi Ross and published by F X Schmid in 1974. Like *Schoko*, supply and demand is the name of the game, though here the goods desired are something of a mystery – being rather abstractly represented by coloured blocks. Sharing a similar anonymity are the companies which players purport to represent. All of this drags the game dangerously close (for a multi-player game) to abstract territory. Though undoubtedly dry for some tastes, the true gamer will soon recognise *Trade* as a classic of its kind.

Trading

At the outset each player receives a company board, ten shares and six cards. The shares are placed on his board on the four different colour groups. The number of goods required to fill these colour groups varies from one (yellow), to seven (green). Lines must be full before sales can be made.

The trading board, on which the units (materials) are put, is placed in the centre of the table. The first thing a player must do is raise some cash, for players start with zilch.

Along with *Shark*, this is one of the few games to utilise such a concept. The only way you can raise capital is to sell shares for 50 a shot. But wait, these guys are what make your subsequent sales so valuable, plus, they cost 100 to buy back.

What to do? Only the first turn and already a dilemma. Just one of the many upside/downside decisions that have to be made in the course of the game. You have to sell something, that's for sure, so with the cash raised you can now attempt to buy some goods, assuming the player on the left lets you. From the cards you were dealt you must select two, preferably in the colour group you want to buy. The player to your left now does the same. Cards are revealed and you are now able to buy any colour which you beat him on, but only up to the difference in value. Thus if player A played a red three and player B played a red one, the former would now be able to buy two red units. The purchase price is the amount stated on the trading board under the unit you have just bought, and of course this rises à la *Crude/McMulti*, as more goods get bought.

At your option

If you have cards totalling nine or more in one colour you may trade this in for an option card of the same colour. As long as you have this you may add three to your score for that colour in the battle of the bids. This is one of those unnecessary additions, and yet one which provides the game with an extra decision-making element: another example of the careful thought which has gone into the game system.

Selling works in much the same way as buying, though the criteria for making a successful sale are tougher; for a start you cannot sell if you have just bought. Secondly there must be at least one 'demand' space vacant (the first four spaces on each group are all supply), and thirdly you must have a complete line full of goods. With the yellow line that's easy, you only need one unit. But unfortunately they are the most expensive, and what if nobody else has bought one? Then, of course, there is no demand, and quick turnover of cash is vital for success in this game. The green line

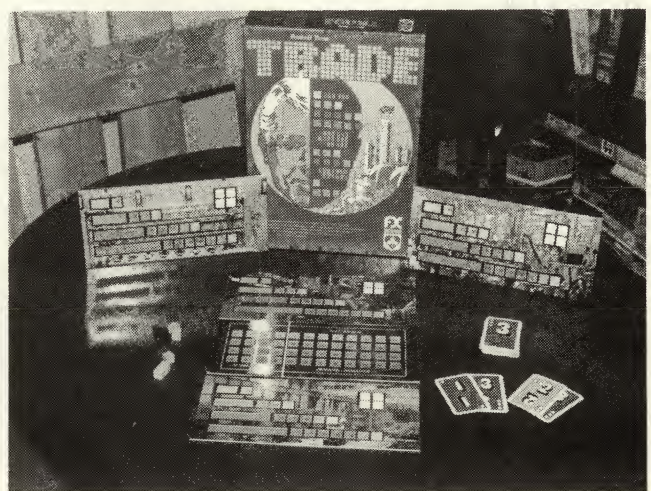
is cheap but you need seven units to fill it including one of each colour, all of which takes time. The upside/downside syndrome again. If you *are* able to make a sale you collect the price stated on the square upon which you place your unit, plus 100 for each share you have on that colour group. Your opponent can, and probably will if he sees you about to make a sale, buy shares in your company providing there is a vacant space.

Window shopping

Instead of placing goods on your company board you may place up to four units in your 'shop window'. Subsequently you may transfer them to your board or sell them to the market when the price is high. This is a sort of rainy day investment. You may not have room for a particular colour, or cards to buy them later on, so stock up now, especially if they're cheap. Like the option cards, the windows feel kind of superfluous, but you'll soon come to know and love them.

At the death, net worth is calculated by cash on hand plus 150 for each share on the board. The winning target is variable depending on how long you like to play. Our group plays up to 3000, a process which normally takes about 90 minutes.

Reading this, *Trade* may sound a little prosaic. In reality, it is both fun and frustration in equal measures, but luck doesn't enter into it, so no delusions here. If you lose, you've nobody to blame but yourself. Perhaps *that's* why it's been out of print for so long. G



CONVENTION REPORTS

Hexacon III

BRAUBACH

May 19–21, 1989

Mike Siggins

Hexacon is the annual meeting of the GHS, the historical boardgame society of West Germany. The three day convention took place over the weekend of the 21st May in Braubach, which sits on the picturesque banks of the Rhein, near Koblenz. Braubach is justly famous for the Marksburg, an 11th century castle which stands atop a steep hill, dominating the village and surrounding area. The castle and its facilities are just about ideal for a games convention apart from the fact that the last hundred feet or so of the hill have to be climbed on foot: not easy when the temperature is in the sultry eighties and one is carrying bags full of games.

The convention was attended by over one hundred keen gamers, including myself, Ellis Simpson and half a dozen more Britons who made the trip.

ALL FOR ONE – ONE FOR ALL

The Germans appear to take their boardgaming very seriously and the GHS has a paying membership of over one hundred. The organisation aims to further the playing of historical games within Germany through national and local conventions and they also produce their own magazine, *Der Musketier*, which has been nominated for a Charles Roberts award this year. Although the magazine is in German, the universal language of Hexacon was English which was a great help for the visitors. Both Ellis and I soon discovered that even if you try to speak German to the locals they promptly reply in English, which is either politeness on their part or a sad comment on our accents.

Related to this was the admirable devotion of the German gamers. Not only do

they have to read rules, charts and magazines in a foreign language but they willingly explain the system, discuss tactics and problems and even design variants and new games using English.

The other area that of course springs to mind is the apparent conflict between the hobby of wargaming, the fierce German anti-wartoy lobby and the country's history. I think it is true to say that where one might imagine problems, very few exist and the gamers are both aware of the potential criticisms and hold mature views concerning the subject. The impression I got was that history was history and the games were the thing. Probably it is best left at that.

MONSTERS EXTINGUISHED

Allowing for the interests of the membership one could be forgiven for expecting nothing but historical boardgames at Hexacon III. Additionally, the Germans have something of a reputation for playing the various monster games that were in vogue some years back, and I believe the previous two Hexacons have featured the massive **Highway to the Reich** (SPI), **Wacht am Rhein** (SPI) and even the legendary **Korsun Pocket** (People's Wargames). In the event, possibly due to the heat, this was far from the truth. The largest games played were probably **Russian Front** (Avalon Hill) and **White Death** (GDW) and there were many non-wargames in evidence at all times, though always in the minority.

The most played games, being generally popular among the German gamers, were **Up Front** (Avalon Hill) and **A House Divided** (GDW) both of which also featured as competitions. To give some idea of the level of commitment, the **Up Front** players featured two 'specialists' who played nothing else all weekend.

The other games played were essentially East Front Second World War, but **Wooden Ships**, **Iron Men** (Avalon Hill), the new **Strategy & Tactics Far Seas** game, **Squad Leader** (Avalon Hill), **Civilization** (Avalon Hill) and an 15mm Ancient figure game also made appearances.

In the non-wargame field **Lieber Bairisch Sterben** (Moskito) and **Full Metal Planete** (Ludodelire) were much played and even **Metric Mile** (Lambourne) made a showing at one point thanks to Ellis's foresight in bringing a copy. I only played three games all weekend (*as usual – Ed*), because of the large number of interesting people, events and the auction, of which more below.

DUTCH AUCTION

Sunday morning saw a frantic rush to register nearly two hundred games for the auction. The games varied in stature between a single issue of *Moves* magazine to a first edition of SPI's **War in the East** and included a fair selection of collector's items; ADG's **Empires in Arms**, several Europa series games, old copies of *Strategy and Tactics* and several Yaquinto games. While there were many bargains to be had, some of the rarer games reached DM 150 (around £50) and bidding was highly competitive at times. Uncharacteristically, I managed to restrain myself to just four purchases. This was without a doubt the best run auction I've seen and it was controlled by a lunatic Dutchman who had a superb auctioneering style as well as a cynical line in game humour. This part of the con was probably worth the trip alone.

It may seem rather extravagant to go all the way to Germany for a single weekend games convention but I believe it is simply an indication of the world becoming that much smaller each year. Given the reasonable air and train fares, excellent accommodation (around £10 per night in Braubach) and fine food it is actually quite practical, economical and appealing compared to UK conventions, especially if you make a week's holiday of it.

Overall, Hexacon III was a fine convention; well run, reasonably priced, with good facilities and with plenty of very friendly gamers. All that added to the excellent setting made for a real winner. I certainly intend to return next year for Hexacon IV which will be held in the same place on the weekend of 10th June 1990 and hopefully then the British contingent will be even larger. GI

Campaign 89

MILTON
KEYNES

May 6-7, 1989

Chris Hunt

If the adverts are to be believed then this is the town of red balloons, high tech and smiling Japanese businessmen. If rumour is to be believed, this is the town of concrete cows. This town is Milton Keynes.

Campaign 89 was a two day event and extremely well organised. Let's face it, being in Milton Keynes it would have to be. Now I know why some motor cars have compasses. Seen one roundabout, seen them all. Not in Milton Keynes, they come at you in packs. Hunter killer roundabouts. Without the carefully placed signs we'd be there now, endlessly circling, waiting only for the concrete vultures and a slow lingering death.

Campaign began in 1981, but first came of age in 1986. It began as a 'straight' wargames convention but has added other sections as it matured. This year Campaign hosted the Southern playoffs for the Osprey World Championships namely, the 15mm 7th Edition Ancients, 25mm 6th Edition Ancients and the 25mm Renaissance. We are talking tabletop. Likewise the Fantasy and Science Fiction Championships featured more miniatures, this time of the chaos spikey-bit variety. In other words **Warhammer 40K** and **Warhammer Fantasy III**. For role-players there was that 3D Role-play hobby game, **Dark Future**. For those preferring games with boards there was a **Bloodbowl** tournament and the Board-game Championships featuring **Kings and Things**, **Spivs**, **Talisman** (complete with **Dungeon** and **Timescape** extensions) and **Battle of the Halji**.

A rather motley collection of games and slightly dominated by the Nottingham contingent, especially considering that GamesDay appears to have taken on the



Attack on the Death Star: winner of the best display award

guise of a closed shop. A point I put to the organiser, Dean Bass. He was non-plussed: 'We'd like to be able to use games from other companies but either they're too obscure or don't exist. At least Games Workshop give support, other companies don't even bother to reply to letters.' A fair point. Many games companies seem to treat PR like symbols you find on an optician's eye chart, to be squinted at and ignored.

So what else was there? The displays ranged from a simulation of the attack by 633 Squadron, to a zulu encampment to an attack on a 12ft long 3ft deep model of Death Star. The Guild of Melee and Magic did a stalwart job of propping up the bar. A new science fiction game called **Starfire** made its first appearance. Several gamers disappeared into the centre of Milton Keynes to find some lunch and were never seen again.

I'll conclude by talking about Campaign 90. This convention is so well organised the date and venue is already set. As for the contents, well, that's partly up to you. The aim of Campaign is to bring gamers of all kinds together. If you would like to see particular kinds of games then contact the organisers. No promises but they'll see what they can do. The aim is to make Campaign the biggest and best gaming convention in Britain. A laudable ambition and not a concrete cow in sight. **G**

Campaign 90 will take place at Waughton Campus, Milton Keynes on 12th and 13th

May. Interested Games Companies and gamers contact Dean H Bass, 14 Skeats Wharf, Pennyland, Milton Keynes, MK15 8AY.

...IT'S FUN,
IT'S
EXCITING,
IT'S REAL,
IT'S NICE,
...BUT BOY
IS IT HOT!

THE 1989
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THE GAME

VARIANT

Nuclear Risk!

Greg Costikyan

Nuclear Risk is a variant to be played with Parker Brothers' Risk! and Flying Buffalo's Nuclear War card game.

ELEVEN

Deal out the Risk cards to determine where the players will place their initial armies.

TEN

Separate the Propaganda, Top Secret, and Secret cards from the Nuclear War deck. These cards will not be used (nor will the population cards). Shuffle the remaining cards (warheads, delivery systems and anti-missiles) into the Risk deck.

NINE

When a player draws cards at the end of his turn for having conquered a province, he draws two cards instead of one.

EIGHT

A player may never have more than six cards in his hand at any time. If drawing cards at the end of his turn results in possession of more than six cards, the drawing player must immediately a) launch a delivery system, b) play three Risk cards and collect the armies as a result, or c) discard cards to reduce his total to six.

SEVEN

At any time (during his own turn or another's) a player who possesses a delivery system card and a warhead card that may be carried by that delivery system may launch the delivery system. He does so simply by turning the cards over, and indicating one province on the board as the target of the attack. The spinner is immediately used, and casualties calculated normally. 'Millions of people' translates

into armies, that is if five million people would be killed in Nuclear War, five armies in the target province are instead eliminated.

SIX

As a result of a nuclear attack, a province may be left without any armies. In this case, the player whose turn it is may move one or more armies into the province from any adjacent province which he possesses which contains more than one army. If he does not do so by the end of his turn, the province remains empty until some player can move one or more armies into the province. Capturing a province in this manner is not considered conquering a province for card-drawing purposes, that is occupying a recently nuked province does not permit the occupying player to draw cards.

FIVE

If a player uses the B-70 delivery system, and does not launch it with a 50 megaton warhead, he keeps the B-70 card face-up in front of him, along with any warheads which the B-70 has dropped. At any time in the game, the player may use the B-70 to launch additional warheads by displaying the warhead card and using the spinner. Warheads may be dropped in provinces which are very far apart, that is the B-70 does not have to fly through contiguous provinces. During the player's turn, the B-70 must be used to drop one or more warheads; if the player is unable or unwilling to produce warhead cards for the B-70, it is discarded along with the warhead cards it had already dropped. When total megatonnage of all warheads dropped by a B-70 equals 50 megatons, the B-70 and warhead cards are discarded. A face-up B-70 card and warhead cards it has dropped are not considered part of a player's 'hand', and do not count against the six card limit.

FOUR

If a nuclear attack is launched against a province occupied by the armies of a player who possesses an antimissile card which is capable of knocking down the delivery system delivering the nuclear at-



tack, the player may play the antimissile card. In this case, both the antimissile card and the delivery system card, along with the warhead card, are discarded and the nuclear attack is considered to have failed, that is no armies are eliminated. The player with the antimissile card must announce that he is using the antimissile card before the spinner is spun.

THREE

If a 100 megaton warhead detonates a nuclear stockpile, the world is considered destroyed and all players lose.


TWO

When a player is eliminated from the game, his Risk cards are given to the player who eliminated him, but his Nuclear War cards are not. If the eliminated player has any warhead delivery system pairs which can be used to make a viable nuclear attack, he may use them to deliver nuclear attacks in a 'final strike'. Any remaining Nuclear War cards are discarded.

ONE

All other rules are as given in the Risk rules.

BOOM!

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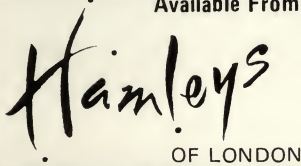


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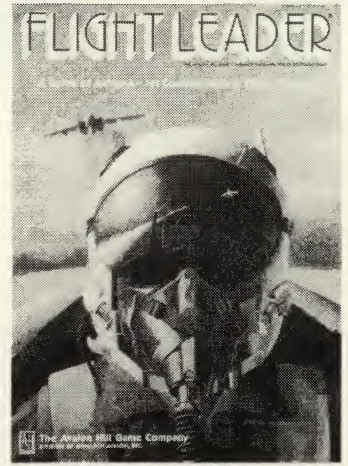


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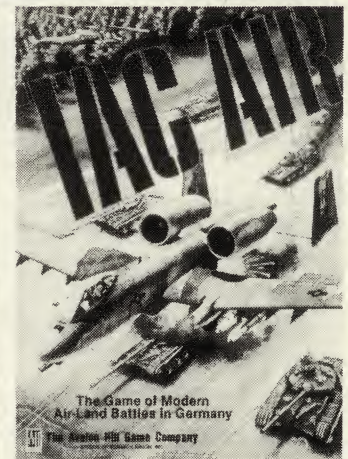
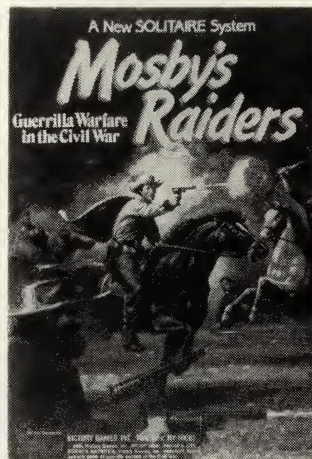
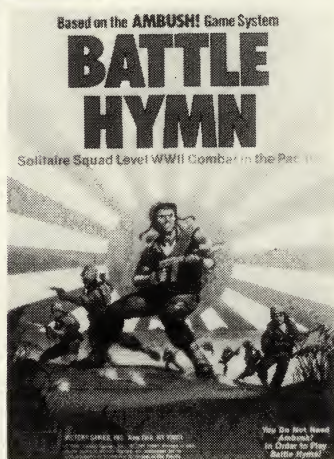
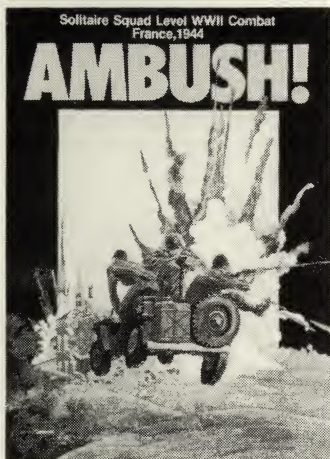
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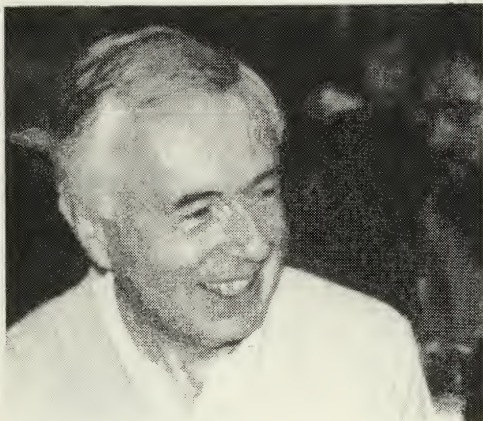


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DESERT ISLAND GAMES

New world games



*This issue Derek Carver, designer of **Warrior Knights** and **Blood Royale**, chooses his ten favourites to keep him company on our desert island.*

I was, in a way, slightly prepared for the invitation to choose the ten games I wouldn't mind being marooned with. On a couple of occasions when looking at my games collection I have asked myself which I'd rescue in case of fire (resisting the classic reply of the young Frenchman who, when asked which picture he would rescue if the Louvre was on fire, replied 'The one nearest the door').

But I suppose being castaway on the island is a bit different. My games aren't threatened with imminent destruction so I don't have to take those most difficult to replace; I have to take the ones we could all happily live with for some time while awaiting rescue.

If I ask myself which of all games has best stood the test of repeated playing over a long period of time, my first choice would have to be a draught board and a set of draughtsmen. Certainly not to play draughts, I hasten to add, but to play *Lines of Action* by Robert Abbot, described in Sid Sackson's *A Gamut of Games*. By nature I'm not a player of abstract nor of two-player games, and this is both, but I've played *Lines of Action* in all sorts of

locations with all sorts of people and have never tired of it. It would be a perfect choice.

Now, since I'm assumed to have had a premonition of the marooning (thus allowing me to pack the ten chosen games), maybe I could put the same to good use and invite David Parlett along to share the boat with us. With David as one of the party all we'd need is a pack of cards, so we could travel light. But assuming he might find the prospect highly resistible I would have to make do with his book of *Original Card Games* (Batsford). I'm assuming that along with the Bible and the Complete Works of Shakespeare, David Parlett's *Penguin Book of Card Games* will be standard issue – together with a couple of packs of cards, of course.

One couldn't let an opportunity like this go by without taking the good games that somehow or other we don't get around to playing – or don't play as much as we'd like to. Donald Benge's *Conquest* should be one (even though the weight of its metal pieces would entail finding a porter pretty sharpish), as would *Borderlands* (Eon) and *Reich* (Chaosium). But with a luggage restriction I would have to settle for only one, so this time I would choose *Conquest* (David Benge and Hexagames), saving the others for a return trip.

I should also take Francis Tresham's most original creation, *Civilisation*, but, despite several attempts, something has always happened to prevent me from finishing a game. I feel sure a desert island would be no exception and the interrup-



tions might not be too pleasant. So instead I'll take Francis's *1830* (Avalon Hill), one of the best.

Something by Sid Sackson must certainly come along, but it will not be *Acquire*. Not that I do not admire *Acquire* but I think it has tended to eclipse an even better game by Sid, *Executive Decision* (Avalon Hill), so that's the one that will be in my games hut should you be passing.

That's five – half way.

My wife, remembering our early married days, has suggested a set of *Poker Dice*. During those days we always played dice for the rotten jobs. She had good reason to remember it – I always lost, which meant I ended up doing far more than my fair share. So to avoid spending most of my time digging the privies, and other similarly delightful diversions, I'm resisting her suggestion. I'll stick to games in which I'm at least in with a chance!

Even though other castaways have chosen it I have a sneaking feeling the editor won't mind my also listing *Die Macher* (Moskito). This amazing game still leaves me dazzled – just how does anybody set about inventing a game like this! I'm full of admiration. Anyway, maybe we can start a play-by-bottle tournament with the other islands sporting their *Die Macher* playing castaways. The same thing goes for *Kremlin* (Fata Morgana and Avalon Hill). Each game is different so on our enforced sojourn we'll all be grateful for friend Urs' little creation.

Now what? Well, things are getting a little heavy, maybe. The other people in the boat might prefer a good old roll-the-dice-and-move game so as a treat for them I'll take along **Broadway** (TSR); such a pity the inventor's other game **Paramount** (like **Broadway** but on the film industry) was shelved.

I would also take **Trade** (FX Schmid). ('Trade!' I hear you say, 'Never heard of it.') Well, not only is it an extremely good game but for me it has a certain sentimental value. It would bring back memories of those exciting days of collecting when one could find a totally unheard-of gem. I found **Trade** on the Hanway Street Games Centre stand at one of the early London Games Days before the event went downhill, and I still remember unpacking the box over a cup of tea in the cafeteria and realising I was on to something special.

So, now for my tenth, and here I crave an indulgence. Among my collection are a number of games of my own invention – some published and some not. I'm not a doting parent; they have to take their turn with the other games on my shelves and

I've modestly avoiding selecting any. However, when a publisher decides to publish one of them the spotlight gets turned on it. Even though it may have been played in our group for years I suddenly have to give it full concentration just to ensure that any fine-tuning necessary to the rules is done once and for all before they are 'fixed' forever for all to read. This has recently been going on with my **New World**, due to be published in the not too distant future by the Avalon Hill Game Company.

Although I've been playing it with different groups time and time again in recent weeks (and sometimes just watching others play it) I *still* genuinely look forward to the next game. It really meets the brief I've been set so into my bag it will go: it's a 'stayer' and should keep us amused on the island for quite some time. Not only that, it will also be a reminder of how I got myself selected to be sent there in the first place! G

Next issue: John Harrington, cheeky cockney sparrow goes native and almost gets crushed by a coconut.

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OPPRESSION

THE GAME

AND REALIZE

SOME PEOPLE SEE
THINGS AS THEY ARE
AND SAY, WHY?
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AND SAY, WHY NOT.

(JOHN F. KENNEDY)

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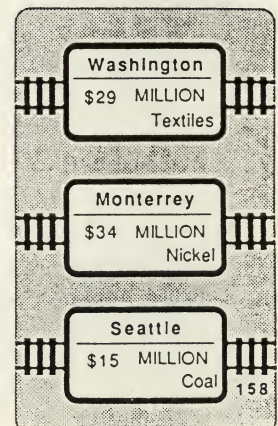
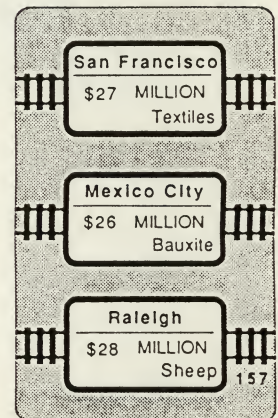
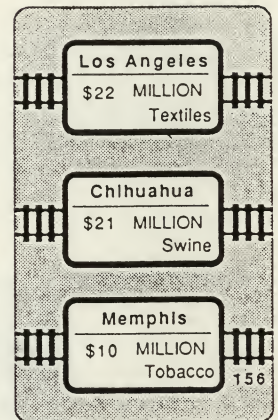
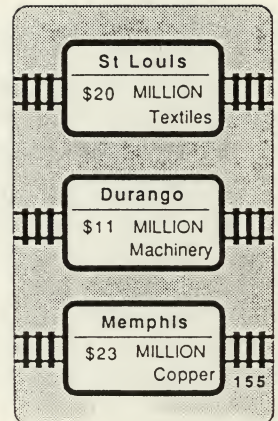
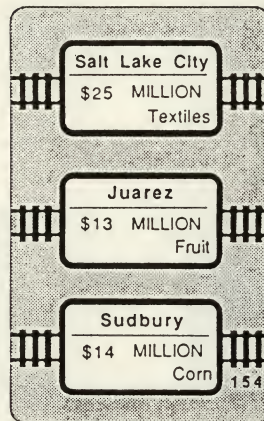
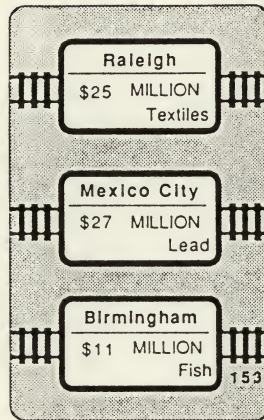
EXPANSION

Viva Mexico!

First published in 1983, *Empire Builder* and the companion game *British Rails* have established themselves as two of the classic railway games. We are now pleased to be able to publish the Mexican expansion kit for *Empire Builder*, designed by the game's inventor, *Darwin Bromley*.

Normal rules apply, including the same victory conditions. The only modification is that the Pacific Coast includes the Gulf of California; the Gulf of Mexico extends to Veracruz.

Simply attach the map to the board, photocopy then mount the cards on board the same size as the game's cards and shuffle them into the pack.



Cities

Chihuahua.....	Cattle
Culiacán.....	Sugar
Durango.....	Silver, Textiles
Guadalajara.....	Corn, Wheat
Hermosillo.....	Fish
Juarez.....	Machinery
Mexico City	
Monterrey.....	Steel, Textiles
Tampico.....	Fish, Oil
Torreón.....	Cotton, Sheep
Veracruz.....	Coffee, Imports

San Francisco
\$39 MILLION
Coffee

Chihuahua
\$29 MILLION
Tobacco

Guadalajara
\$10 MILLION
Imports

158

Knoxville
\$27 MILLION
Silver

Mexico City
\$6 MILLION
Oil

Detroit
\$11 MILLION
Fish

141

Houston
\$12 MILLION
Silver

Juarez
\$12 MILLION
Steel

Las Vegas
\$26 MILLION
Swine

144

Las Vegas
\$24 MILLION
Silver

Mexico City
\$23 MILLION
Coal

Denver
\$15 MILLION
Iron

147

Calgary
\$45 MILLION
Coffee

Mexico City
\$10 MILLION
Cotton

Cheyenne
\$21 MILLION
Wood

159

Montreal
\$43 MILLION
Silver

Chihuahua
\$23 MILLION
Iron

Houston
\$16 MILLION
Tourists

142

Veracruz
\$14 MILLION
Silver

Guadalajara
\$30 MILLION
Oats

Portland, Me.
\$23 MILLION
Bauxite

145

Boise
\$30 MILLION
Silver

Guadalajara
\$34 MILLION
Cars

Montreal
\$22 MILLION
Oats

148

Tampico
\$9 MILLION
Coffee

Durango
\$8 MILLION
Cattle

Veracruz
\$27 MILLION
Coal

170

Pittsburgh
\$33 MILLION
Silver

Hermosillo
\$11 MILLION
Uranium


Calgary
\$27 MILLION
Bauxite

150

Loads available

.....	Mexico City
Cattle.....	Chihuahua
Coffee	Veracruz
Corn	Guadalajal
Cotton	Torreón
Fish	Hermosillo, Tampico
Imports	Veracruz
Machinery	Juarez
Oil.....	Tampico
Sheep.....	Torreón
Silver	Durango
Steel.....	Monterey
Sugar	Culiacán
Textiles	Durango, Monterrey
Wheat.....	Guadalajara

GREENPEACE




THE GREAT WHALES

Since commercial whaling was banned in 1986, 11,000 whales have been slaughtered, most for so-called scientific research.

Iceland was the first whaling nation to side-step the commercial whaling ban. To make Iceland pay dearly for the whales she kills, Greenpeace is promoting a boycott of Icelandic fish. Meanwhile Greenpeace will work for a permanent ban on commercial whaling.

THANK GOD SOMEONE'S MAKING WAVES

GREENPEACE



NON-VIOLENCE


In 18 years of campaigning, Greenpeace's greatest achievement has been its refusal to resort to violence. Ever.

At least as important as opposing nuclear weapons, saving whales or trying to stop ocean pollution, is the way it has been done.

To Greenpeace, the peace is as important as the green; the means is as important as the end.

THANK GOD SOMEONE'S MAKING WAVES

GREENPEACE



NUCLEAR POWER

The possibility of future nuclear accidents is real.


The probability is high.

A core meltdown accident possibly resulting in Chernobyl scale releases of radiation can be expected within 20 years according to former US Nuclear Regulatory Commissioner Asselstine.

Greenpeace has raised fundamental questions on the safety of UK gas-cooled reactors and is campaigning for their closure.

THANK GOD SOMEONE'S MAKING WAVES

GREENPEACE



THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT

Global temperatures are rising. The effects are unpredictable and likely to be catastrophic.


Among the causes are pollution from energy production, car exhausts and CFC gases.

The answer? - Efficient energy use, cleaner methods of electricity production, and the development of renewable energy resources.

Greenpeace is campaigning to reduce all pollutants which contribute to the greenhouse effect; for an end to wasteful forms of electricity production, for positive measures to save energy, for reductions in car emissions, and for an immediate end to all production of CFCs.

THANK GOD SOMEONE'S MAKING WAVES

GREENPEACE



CAR EXHAUSTS

A car in the UK pumps out an average of a ¼ tonne of toxic pollution every year.


In the US it is a fraction of this figure.

The technology exists to reduce the poison from our exhaust pipes, but few manufacturers are using it in the UK.

Greenpeace is campaigning to force car manufacturers in the UK to provide cars as clean as those they sell in other countries.

THANK GOD SOMEONE'S MAKING WAVES

GREENPEACE



MARINE POLLUTION

Pollution in our seas and estuaries is destroying habitats and killing marine life.

Urgent action is needed now to stop the discharge of industrial, chemical and radioactive wastes and the dumping of sewage sludge - the UK and Ireland are the only countries still dumping sewage sludge into the North and Irish seas.

Greenpeace has blocked chemical discharge pipes, confronted dump ships and researched and reported on the effects of toxic pollution.

In 1989, Greenpeace will continue to confront the polluters and to campaign for laws to be amended and enforced to protect our seas.

THANK GOD SOMEONE'S MAKING WAVES

Greenpeace stands for

- A safe, nuclear free world ■ Fresh air
- Clean water
- The protection of wildlife and its habitats.

GREENPEACE

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The Daily News
MEXICAN RAIL STRIKE!
 March 17, 1984 FINAL

No train in Mexico may move. No train may enter Mexico. No player may build track in Mexico.

173

The Daily News
FLOODS!
 March 17, 1984 FINAL

No train may cross the Rio Grande, Rio Conchos, or Rio del Fuerte. All rail lines over these rivers are destroyed, but may be rebuilt.

171

The Daily News
DERAILMENT!
 March 17, 1984 FINAL

Any train within 3 mileposts of Tampico, Torreón, Hermosillo, and Houston lose one turn and one load.

174

The Daily News
EARTHQUAKE!
 March 17, 1984 FINAL

All trains within 8 mileposts of Mexico City move at half rate and lose one load. All trains within 3 mileposts of Mexico City lose one turn and all loads. No rail building within 10 mileposts of Mexico City.

172

The Daily News
U.S. RAIL STRIKE!
 March 17, 1984 FINAL

No train in U.S. may move. No train may enter U.S. No player may build track in U.S.

175

Omaha
 \$20 MILLION
 Textiles

Juarez
 \$28 MILLION
 Wood

Des Moines
 \$18 MILLION
 Imports

152

Norfolk
 \$40 MILLION
 Coffee

Monterrey
 \$23 MILLION
 Tourists

Veracruz
 \$14 MILLION
 Sheep

155

Boston
 \$46 MILLION
 Coffee

Norfolk
 \$23 MILLION
 Wheat

Torreón
 \$22 MILLION
 Swine

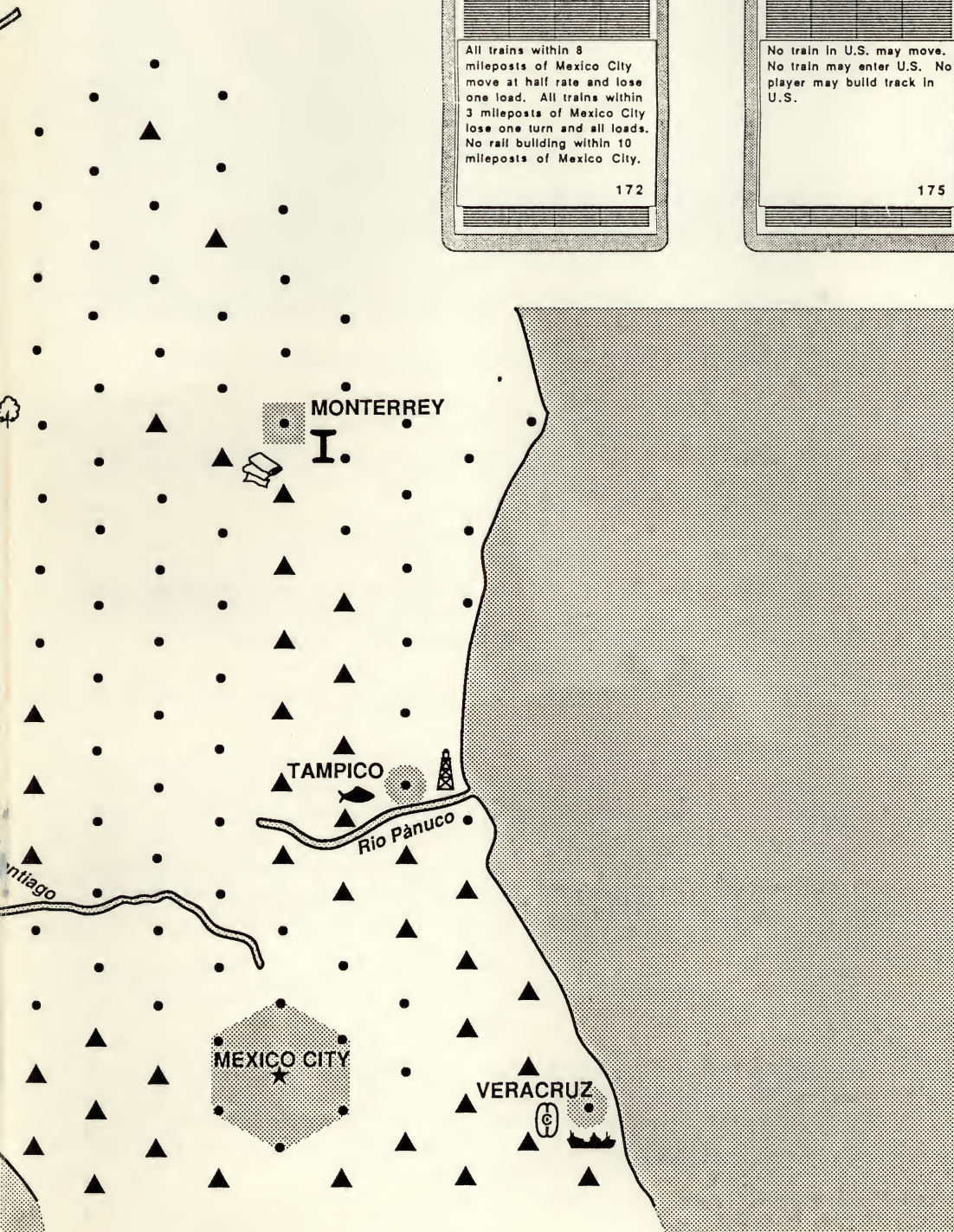
156

New Orleans
 \$28 MILLION
 Coffee

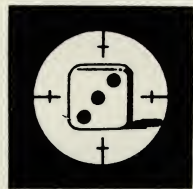
Mexico City
 \$13 MILLION
 Sugar

Cheyenne
 \$17 MILLION
 Cars

167



Empire Builder is published by Mayfair Games, price £19.95.



SNIPER

Have you ever wondered to yourself: 'What am I doing here?' Not with reference to one's earthly presence in general, but more pertaining to a particular time or place. I have. Indeed I made just such a philosophical inquiry one day last month when I found myself at tenthirty in the morning eating 'swamp dip' accompanied by a vodka, tequila and cranberry juice cocktail, while peering at a computer screen in Chislehurst caves. The caves are owned, appropriately enough, by a company calling itself Kent Mushrooms Ltd. The cause for my being in this slightly surrealist situation could only be one of two things: 1) I was on the set of the latest George Lucas film, or 2) I was at a press launch.

I've never heard of this George Lucas chap, writes reader P Edant of Stoke Poges, so it must be assumed that you were at this thing you call a 'press launch'. Could you describe such an event for me please.

Of course. A press launch is an event where great quantities of alcohol are supplied to thirsty hacks by companies with new products to promote. The hope is that said hacks will get drunk enough to write something nice about them. A chap called Faust used to make similar kinds of pacts.

Does it work?

Mostly, yes. Sometimes the hacks write rude things if the booze is not up to scratch. The worst thing, though, is not to get a mention at all. This only happens in extreme cases.

Like what?

When there's no booze at all.

But why hold these events in places like caves?

From the companies point of view, caves are ideal places for press launches. For one thing, you can't leave when all the booze has run out. You have to wait for a guide.

Why don't they just send them the booze and a few brochures and let them get on with it?



Press Launch: SF writer Dave Langford prepares to get down in the mire.

This is a very good idea but would be too easy. It would also, at a stroke, disenfranchise the entire public relations industry who make a living out of organising such events.

I see. But where did all this start and what exactly is public relations?

One question at a time please. No one knows for sure, but the feeling is that PR, as it is known, was born out of the pop/advertising boom in the sixties. If, say, a new record came out, record company press officers would invite truckloads of journalists for a drink or six to advise them of the fact, though most of them already knew, of course. The art of public relations, as you can see, is pretence. Even the name is something of a con; these people have no relations with the public.

Does the government know about all this?

Oh yes. In fact they are the biggest exponents of PR, only in their case it is used for trying to conceal things. It's probably one of the big growth areas in government today. Naturally, though, they don't like to think of themselves as being part of the public relations industry.

Why not?

Because nobody would believe anything they said.

What are they called then?

In PR speak they are often referred to as information officers, though their real purpose is to spread disinformation.

Could you give me an example of this so-called 'disinformation'?

Certainly. When the Americans were slaughtering tens of thousands of Vietnamese, their information officers called this 'pacification'. Likewise when the Russians were brainwashing dissidents in psychiatric wards, their information officers called it 're-education'.

So what you are saying is that these people will say anything if you pay them enough?

In two words, yes.

I see. But what does all this have to do with you being down a cave in Chislehurst?

Ah yes, I was coming to that.

Get on with it then.

I was there to witness the launch of the totally wonderful new books by Joe Dever, Britain's best author since James Herbert. *Eclipse of the Kai* and *The Dark Door Opens* are the first two novels in the *Lone Wolf Fantasy Saga*. These books are so totally wonderful that they've been converted into a computer game called *Lone Wolf - The Mirror of Death* (Audiogenic Software). There's also *Lone Wolf Phonequest* - an interactive telephone adventure that many reckon is almost as exciting as a call to the speaking clock. And let's not forget *Freeway Warrior*, the latest thrilling series, now on sale in the remaindered section at the Charing Cross station bookstall.

Did they pay you to gush like that?

Not in so many drinks.

(With apologies to Miles Kington)

Dreaded than Dredd

Welcome back to these shores celebrity golfer and co-founder of Games Workshop Ian Livingstone. After much speculation Ian confirms that he and Steve Jackson have finally sold their controlling interest in GW, leaving the company in the hands of Bryan Ansell (aka The Dark Lord).

Where one goes the other follows, and sure enough Steve was spotted clutching a bullfight poster and singing *Viva España* on a recent flight from Murcia to Blighty. As to the future, Steve will probably continue writing *FIST* scenarios. Ian was a bit more secretive. Perhaps he'll form a games company?

During the course of our conversation, Ian relates an amusing anecdote concerning **Judge Dredd**, one of the first boardgames he designed. Its release coincided with that of a record by an ersatz reggae singer of the same name, albeit with a different spelling (D-R-E-A-D). A few weeks on, Ian received a phone call from the irate Judge demanding that the game be taken off the market. It transpired that His Worship had been getting earache from mums up and down the country, furious that their kiddiewinkle had bought his record in the belief that he and the fantasy Judge were one and the same. 'So what?' you ask. In his day, the Judge was notorious for putting out somewhat risqué titles. His latest waxing was no exception: 'I'm Dick, do you like it?'

GI

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NEWS

The past few months have been very quiet as far as new American releases go. However, with several large games conventions looming all this is about to change. Companies are increasingly beginning to realise the (cash flow) importance of timing the release date of their new games to coincide with such events.

Holy Batgames

Mayfair Games are to release the **Batman Role-playing Game** and supporting products to coincide with the movie (Michael Keaton as the Dark Knight, Jack Nicholson as The Joker) which is due out late summer.

The **Batman Role-playing Game** will be an introductory rolegame featuring the caped crusader and his exploits in Gotham City. Published in a 190 page paperback, the game will include an introductory solo adventure, a map of Gotham City, and a full-scale adventure for 4-6 player characters including Batman, Robin, Batgirl, Nightwing, and many more. In addition there will also be rules for character interaction, powers and skills, character design and gadgetry for more advanced players. The US retail price is a suggested \$9.95.

Supporting products include **The Batman Sourcebook** and three adventures – **A Night in Gotham**, **Wheel of Destruction**, and **Dream Machine**.

Next issue we'll be featuring a review of the game, the film, and some of the more inspirational comics featuring the Dark Knight.

Invincible who?

Also from Mayfair a new adventure module for their **City-State of the Invincible Overlord** role-playing game. **Briarwood Castle** is a three box supplement which can be used with any existing fantasy campaign as well as with the core product.

The 40 page background book outlines the history of the castle, personalities, and new defences. Also, there are new rules for monsters and spells. The 16 page adventure book is filled with random adventures and castle encounters as player character attempt to breach the defences of Briarwood Castle.

The final product in the pack is the **Book Of Dungeons** which details over 50 rooms for adventuring.

News from the hill

Avalon Hill have released **Hollow Legions** – the latest **Advanced Squad Leader** Module, **Desert War** – an expansion for **Upfront** which adds Italians to the game, **Turning Point at Stalingrad** – the latest in the **Storm over Arnhem** system, **Napoleon's Battles** – a new set of miniature rules, and finally, the long awaited **Siege of Jerusalem**.

AH's sister company, Victory Games, is to release **5th Fleet** (the fourth game of the series), and **Shell Shock**, a two player version of **Ambush**.

MegaPlanes

GDW have just released **COACC** (Close orbit control and command), a new 96 page sourcebook for **MegaTraveller**. Contents include character generation for flyers in **MegaTraveller**, new aircraft design and air combat rules, tech level tables for aircraft throughout the imperium, examples of aircraft, and the **Eddum Campaign**. The latter is a complete campaign to win the hearts and minds (good morning Vietnam) of the people of the Eddum.

Meanwhile in their **Space: 1889** series, GDW release **Cloudships and Gunboats** featuring detailed deck plans, and additional information and construction rules for new vessels. Also provided with this supplement are 25mm card stock miniatures in full colour and with plastic stands. GDW also have two *more* new products for **Space: 1889**; **Conklin's Atlas** is reviewed this issue, while **Beastmen of Mars** features the new adventure **The Dreaded Cult of the Worm**.

Not just numbers

Steve Jackson Games have acquired the license for the cult TV series **The Prisoner**, which starred Patrick McGoohan as a secret agent held captive in a mysterious village. The first products based around this material will be an addition to the **GURPS** system, followed by a series of party games.

Another new license is L. Sprague de Camp's **Krishna** books. A series of swashbuckling 'space opera' tales for

which Steve Jackson will write the **GURPS** worldbook followed by a series of adventures. July releases for **GURPS** include **Conan**, **Supers**, **Wild Cards**, plus a free errata sheet which can be obtained upon request. New products for **Car Wars** include the **Car Wars Compendium** – a complete set of rules in one volume, **Car Wars City Blocks 4**, and **Autoduel America Map**.

Finally, for all you fashion conscious gamers, Steve Jackson Games will be selling **Illuminati** jewelry. The design will be the familiar **Illuminati** pyramid logo and will come in eight different colours. Perfect for those afternoons posing down the King's Road.

Mags for RuneQuesters

Thought by many to be a Rolls-Royce among rolegames, **RuneQuest** now has a UK fanzine dedicated to it. **Tales of the Reaching Moon** is devoted to news, reviews and further details of Greg Stafford's world of Glorantha. It's available for £1 from David Hall, 14 Park Lane, Slough, Berkshire SL3 7PF.

Meanwhile, for the Gallophiles among you, **Tatou** caters in the inimitable French fashion for Gloranthan adventurers as well as fans of **Stormbringer** and **Hawkmoon**. A professional French-language publication, **Tatou** is 30F from ORI-FLAM, 132 Rue de Marly 57158 Montigny-les-Metz, France.

Orgles live on

Octogo Games have bought up the remaining stock of **Orgy** from the bankrupt Commissatio. The game will be on sale in the usual places. Bring your own plain brown wrapper.

Villa down?

The latest games company to be heading for an unscheduled meeting of creditors would appear to be Villa games, who produced **The Wine Game** and **The Scotch Whisky Game**. We understand that the bank has instructed them not to write any more cheques. At least that's what their accounts department tell us.

1829 and all that

Encouraged by increased sales, Hartland Trefoil have released two new expansion kits for their railway game **1829**. The exact details of the kits are unavailable at the time of going to press, though we understand they will include new tiles. ☐

REVIEWS

ABSTRACT GAMES

QUADROMANIA

DESIGNED BY
G A ELLSBURY

PUBLISHED BY
RED DRAGON GAMES

PRICE £9.99



The rules start by modestly announcing that 'Quadromania is the superlative new strategy game for two players'. French readers are told that it is 'without parallel'. German readers are informed that it is '*hervorragende*', which, I believe, means outstanding.

The quality of the board, the components – which are thick coloured plastic shapes – and the rules, printed in full colour on glossy paper, are well up to current industry standards, as is the amount of empty space in the box. The playing surface has a wide border which makes the box more than twice the size it need be.

The game is played on a four by four grid, with pieces of four colours: red, green, yellow and blue, and four shapes: stars, circles, triangles and squares. Every combination is represented, making sixteen pieces in all, sufficient to fill the board.

The board starts empty, and the players alternately place a piece on the board. The pieces are not assigned to either player, but form a common pool. Scoring is by forming *quads*, which are blocks of four pieces adjacent to each other, or *rows*, which are four pieces in a straight line, which could be either of the diagonals.

The players decide, before they start, who will score *colour* and who will score by *shape*. For the player scoring on colour, the scores are two for a *quad* of different colours, three for a *row* of different colours, five for a *row* of the same colour, and 10 for a *quad* of the same colour. The

scoring for the *shape* player is identical, except that *shape* replaces *colour*.

When a piece is played, it can score for the player placing it, but also for his opponent. Thus, it is most unlikely that you will want to threaten to create a *quad* of four identical colours, worth 10 points, because as soon as three of them have been placed, of the same colour and therefore of different shapes, your opponent will probably place a piece of the fourth shape, but a different colour, and take three points, leaving you with nothing.

The winner 'can be the first player to win an agreed number of games or the first player to reach an agreed number of points.' Indeed, it could be. Unfortunately, this emphasised a negative feature of the game. As might be expected in a game with only eight moves per player on a tiny board, it is relatively easy to play defensively. John or Mary could take a long time to win those extra points or games.

The rules suggest a simple notation by which games can be recorded, which is just the algebraic notation used in chess, except that a1 turns out to be the farthest left-hand square (in their sample game) or the nearest right-hand square (when they are explaining the notation).

The rules use the notation to illustrate a game – I was going to say: 'illustrate a short game', but all games of *Quadromania* are short! *Shape's* fourth move is an obvious blunder, and *colour* is winning 6-4 after two more moves each. In the last two moves they each gain a three point row, but the game was effectively over after six moves, and could as well have ended without further scoring.

The rules conclude by wishing purchasers 'many years of enjoyment mastering the strategy and tactics of *Quadromania*!' Well, this is the crunch, isn't it? How much strategy and tactics is there in the game? How much can there be in an eight move game on a four by four board? There is little tactics, of course. You can threaten two possible scores at once, you might even threaten to threaten such a 'fork', thought the three moves involved will take up nearly half the entire game.

It is most unlikely that you will want to threaten certain scores, for the reason already explained. Years to master?

Strategy appears in games of all sorts, as a function of their complexity. Overall patterns, general tendencies, broad inductions from past experience tell the chess player not to carelessly disturb the pawns in front of his king, the go player to keep away from thickness, and the Twixt player not to try to crudely bludgeon his way through.

What strategies can exist for such a tiny game as *Quadromania*? A moot point, which the manufacturers do not attempt to answer. In the absence of any guidance from them, I will suggest one strategy which might prove profitable for one game. You need to be the second player. Your opponent plays first and places, say, a red square. You choose a piece of different colour and different shape and place it in the position the same distance on the other side of the centre of the board. In other words, you keep the *position* symmetrical.

Suppose that you played the green triangle. For the rest of that game, red and green are opposite colours (and therefore so are yellow and blue), and square and triangle are opposite shapes (and therefore so are circle and star). Your strategy is simply to play the opposite piece on your opponent, on the centrally opposed position.

In this way your score will be identical to that of your opponent, provided you follow this strategy. However – and this is the cunning of this plan – assuming that your opponent pretty cheesed off as he realises that he cannot possibly win, there is a chance that he will play a really bad move which allows you to suddenly stop imitating him, play a much better move and win! When your opponent attempts to start again, this time as the second player, you, of course, switch to a better game.

Red Dragon's motto is 'I think, therefore I play.' Not *Quadromania*, I don't!

David Wells

AXIOM

DESIGNED BY
MICHAEL SEAL

PUBLISHED BY
SEVENTH SEAL

PRICE £19.95



I think I must be approaching my century of game reviews – most of them for the now-defunct *Games & Puzzles* – and this, for *Axiom*, has possibly caused me the most trouble. By that, I do not mean to imply that the game is difficult to understand or play, but it is difficult to play well without a great deal of experience. It is a question of doing justice to a game whose ramifications are hardly evident to someone with limited time.

In the baldest terms the object of *Axiom* – which is a two-player game – is to move one of two pieces into a certain positional relationship with one of the opponent's pieces. These pieces, called 'sceptres' because that is what they look like, occupy the faces of a set of 12 cubes which fit together to form a playing surface in three dimensions. There are six white cubes and six black cubes and the cubes of each colour are of two types distinguished by the nature of the faces. Each face of every

cube is either recessed or supports a pyramidal convexity so that cubes may be fitted together in a restricted number of ways. The sceptres always occupy a recessed face.

On his turn a player may move one of his sceptres or one of his cubes. A cube may be moved only if it holds no sceptre and does not lie directly beneath another cube, and it may be moved to any unobstructed position provided it has at least one edge in contact with the edge of another cube. If the player decides to move one of his sceptres it must move throughout in a vertical or horizontal plane, or in a plane at 45 degrees to a horizontal or vertical plane. Its movement must be unobstructed by another sceptre or by a convexity on the face of a cube. However, it may move through restricted spaces. If a player moves one of his two sceptres onto a cube one of whose faces is occupied by an opponent's sceptre, the former wins the game.

The foregoing might be sufficient to indicate the nature of the game though obviously it is not possible to cover all the rules here. The rule book is remarkably compact and clear, and the equipment is also produced to a very high standard. Now for the value judgements!

That the game is abstract should be crystal clear, and indeed the best players are likely to be crystallographers able to mentally manipulate three dimensional shapes and visualise spatial relationships. *Axiom* is a game of considerable originality and one must admire the dedication and professionalism which have gone

into its production. Yet, for me, it is too contrived. Given that cubes provide a sensible basis for creating a playing surface in three dimensions why is it necessary to have cubes with either one, or two, convexities on the faces? Why are the sceptres so long that they have to have special sculptured recesses to allow them to fit together in certain positions? I cannot escape the feeling that magnetic cubes with coloured faces, and magnetic counters instead of sceptres, would have produced a much more compact and less confusing appearance.

One of the numerical parameters which characterise a game with discrete moves is the 'fan-out factor'. This is just the average number of distinct moves which a player could make on his turn to play. Good games rarely have a fan-out factor greater than 12. (Chess is an exception with a factor of around 30, but most feasible moves can be ruled out as very weak.) I would guess that the factor for *Axiom* is around 40, and it is quite difficult to dismiss any potential move as weak without much analysis.

So, to summarise, although I love abstract games and original abstract games in particular, I am not captivated by *Axiom*. However, there is no doubt that someone who played it regularly would discover subtleties which have escaped me. Buy it and try it, and look out for a future review written by someone who has been able to dedicate some weeks to playing it.

Eric Solomon

STACK

DESIGNED BY
GEORGE BALL

PUBLISHED BY
B B GAMES

PRICE £6.95



Inventors often rediscover game principles independently and the stacking idea of *Stack* has appeared in a number of other guises. At a fundamental level, *Stack* has similarities to Emmanuel Las-

ker's *Lasca*, *Focus* (produced by Spears who do not credit the inventor, though I am fairly certain it is Sid Sackson), Robert Abbott's *Epaminondas*, and my own unpublished game *Hexagony*. All but *Lasca* use the rule that an ensemble of pieces move as a whole a distance equal to the number of pieces in the ensemble.

In *Stack* the object is to get one of your pieces, or a stack of pieces with one of yours on top, on to the opponent's back row and to survive one further turn.

The board is a 5 by 8 rectangle of 'squares' and pieces move orthogonally but not diagonally. When a piece ends its turn on a square occupied by another it is stacked on top, and the stack is then controlled by the player who completed the move.

In this way stacks may grow to any height limited only by the number of pieces in the game. Stacks may also be split. For example a player controlling a stack may lift the top three pieces of the stack and move them three squares leaving the original stack controlled by either player.

I would recommend *Stack* as the best two-player game of its type which I have seen. The pieces are well designed so that stacking is easy and secure, the board is attractive, and the rules are clear though ungrammatical. Perhaps the rules should have emphasised that a stack of N pieces *must* be split if it is desired to move a distance less than N squares through necessity or choice.

Eric Solomon

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REVIEWS

WARGAMES

LAST BATTLE

DESIGNED BY
TIM RYAN

PUBLISHED BY
GDW

PRICE £16.95



The First Battles series from GDW has to date brought us **Team Yankee** and **Test of Arms**. The third game in the series is **Last Battle**, an appropriate title as the battles are set in the near future after nuclear attacks have left cities and armies devastated.

If all this sounds strangely familiar to some of you, it may be because this game doubles as a **Twilight 2000** module. The idea is that players of the **Twilight 2000** system can use the module to fight out combats as they occur in the role-playing game. In addition, **Last Battle** can be played as a stand alone wargame without any previous knowledge or purchase of the **Twilight 2000** system.

The artwork on the box is perhaps the first indication that the game has rolegaming roots, and I found myself checking the box a couple of times before being satisfied that it was a wargame.

IN THE WASTELAND

Upon opening the box, I was both pleased and surprised. The contents are quite different from the two previous games, suggesting that each of the games in the First Battles series will be stand alone games. There are six small semi-geomorphic maps which use a two inch hex grid similar to that used in **Advanced Squad Leader** modules. The artwork is similar to **Test of Arms**, but the maps look a little bare – perhaps understandable in a post-nuclear period. The really striking items

are the counters, which come in three sizes: the infantry are portrayed on the standard half inch counters, but the vehicles are displayed on one inch and one and a quarter inch counters, and look quite splendid when placed on the maps.

Another addition to the series are 64 vehicle cards, each giving all the information that a player will require about a vehicle's capabilities and crew. The rules are a 16 page booklet, with the scenarios in a matching booklet.

SAME DIFFERENCE?

The general format of the game is similar to that of the previous modules and one could be forgiven for assuming that this is the same system with a few new tweaks to accommodate the subject matter. Be warned: this is a different game, and I find it a little strange that it is part of the same series.

The main difference is in the sequence of play. The new sequence is: player A move, player B reaction fire, player A fire any units which have not moved. On first reading there did not appear to be a facility for opportunity fire (firing as one's opponent moves), a vital game mechanic for modern games at this scale. However, I finally extracted the following sentence from the section on reaction fire: 'Each one may fire at any enemy unit which is within or moved within its range, and may do so as if firing at any time during the enemy unit's movement.' This seems to be the opportunity fire rule, and it is the poorest example of one that I have come across.

It becomes very difficult to remember which path units have moved along in the previous phase and I would recommend that players adopt instant opportunity fire procedures as found in most similar games.

The combat system is also new. Counters now represent groups of men numbering between one and six, and players can form or divide groups as they see fit as long as each member of the group (a single counter) has the same weapon. This allows players to design their forces

to suit the current situation and is a good simulation of man-management of platoon level units.

Because a counter can represent more than one man, and casualties are taken as single men, counters are broken down to represent the appropriate number of casualties taken. A mechanic inherited from rolegaming is the use of saving die rolls: the defender gets the chance to nullify each hit scored by the attacker by rolling a die (average troops would need to roll a 1 against a hit to cancel it). As a wargamer, it took me a little while to get used to this, but with so much open space on the map, there would be widespread elimination without it.

PROGRAMMED DESTRUCTION

The rules are set out in programmed fashion so that, for example, only the first four pages need be read to play the first scenario. Most of the rules are presented in short easily read sections. The section that covers horses (yes, vehicles are so rare now that horses can bring the troops into action) is only a paragraph long and adequately covers the use of horses: compare that to how horses are dealt with in **Advanced Squad Leader**. This sums up the rule book: brief, to the point, and user-friendly, although at times players may need house rules to deal with one-off situations or ambiguities.

As with the previous games, **Last Battle** strongly encourages you to design your own scenarios, and has a useful two page section dedicated to this aim. The centre pages of the scenario booklet reveal a large blank hex map sheet for players to photocopy and use to design their own maps.

All the scenarios are taken from **Twilight 2000** and they are well documented. A chapter is included that describes how to use player characters in the game, as well as a vehicle information sheet that displays the attributes of vehicles and their point values, so that campaign games can be constructed.

In all there are quite a number of new ideas in this game. Some of them I strong-

CHARTS

Wargames

- ① Last Battle (GDW)
- ② Battletech (FASA)
- ③ Team Yankee (GDW)
- ④ Empire 4 (Empire Press)
- ⑤ The Last Hurrah (Avalon Hill)
- ⑥ Battletech Reinforcements (FASA)
- ⑦ Tokyo Express (Victory)
- ⑧ Imperium Romanum (West End)
- ⑨ Sniper! Bug Hunter (TSR)
- ⑩ Harpoon (GDW)

Chart supplied by Virgin Games.

ly favour, such as each vehicle having two movement values, one for on road, and one for off. Some others I am less enthusiastic about, but that is perhaps because I don't care for non-wargame mechanics such as saving rolls.

The game production is nice, and some of the components are quite different to those of typical wargames. Although this would be termed a low complexity game, however, it does not feel as smooth as the two previous games: the combat mechanics are a little cumbersome and require lots of die rolls.

This must be a welcome addition for *Twilight 2000* enthusiast and for those who are interested in man to man, tank to tank encounters of the modern era. Those who want a follow on from *Team Yankee* or *Test of Arms* may find *Last Battle* an acquired taste.

Norman Smith

In next issue's **WARGAMES** section:

Mike Siggins' romp through the green fields of Napoleonic wargames.

Reviews of Attactix games and all the new releases from Origins.

ONSLAUGHT VARIANT

Landing at Calais

Norman Smith

Calais is the closest point on the French coast to British soil. Understandably, the German High Command were convinced that this would be where the main Allied invasion would come. This belief was reinforced by Operation Fortitude, the British deception plan that was to make the Germans believe that Calais was the true invasion point, and divert attention away from the Normandy region. This scenario explores the hypothetical landing around Calais. All rules remain unchanged other than set-up.

Move the German 44 unit from hex 2693 to hex 2523.

Place two American infantry units into hex 2693.

Place one British and one Canadian infantry unit into hex 2624 (Calais).

Place one British para unit into hex 2526.

Place two American para units into hex 2524.

The Allies draw four supply points from hexes 2693, 2624 and 2625 in a similar fashion to the way that the Normandy beaches are used in the standard game. The beaches at Normandy are not available for landing or supply. The Fortitude optional rule (number 4, below) cannot be used with this scenario.

Optional Rules

① To support the attacks at Caen, on the 7th and 18th of July the British sent hundreds of bomber aircraft ahead to soften the defences. At the very start of Turn Three, before the Allied action, the

Allies can announce air attack against any German stack that is adjacent to a British or Canadian unit. The German stack is attacked with an attack strength of eight points. The result is applied at once. The attacker air unit is not represented on the game board and cannot be affected by adverse combat results.

② Rommel wanted to deploy his armour at the coast. He was overruled, but the presence of armour at the invasion point may have had a grave effect upon the invasion plan. After set-up, but before play, the German indicates which armoured units will move toward the beaches. A die is then rolled for each unit or stack. If the result is 1-3, then the unit or stack must move directly towards hex 2014 up to a maximum of five hexes. If the result is 4-6 then the armoured unit or stack must move up to a maximum of five hexes towards hex 2624. Each unit or stack may be subject to one attempt only.

③ On 19th and 23rd June, severe storms badly damaged the manmade harbours that had been placed around Normandy beachhead. At the start of Turn Two and for that turn only, the Allied player rolls a die and removes a number of supply points from the Allied supply track equal to the die roll.

④ Operation Fortitude effectively tied down most of the German 15th Army in the Pas de Calais until late July, since they feared a second invasion. Any German unit within five hexes of hex 2624 (Calais) may not make any movement (except retreat after combat) until Turn Four. G

Source: *Overlord* by Max Hastings.

Onslaught is published by TSR, price £14.95.

AIR WARGAMES

Tally Ho!

Lee Brimmicombe-Wood

The aviation writer Alfred Price once wrote that the best way to simulate a Spitfire dogfighting a Messerschmitt is to buy yourself a Spit and an Me109, load 'em up with live ammo and let rip! Since you need to have your head examined and a few bob spare to perform this stunt, it's unlikely any of us will ever try. However, lest you be deterred from starting a career as a fighter ace, I suggest you look no further than the shelves of your local games shop.

Of course, over the years the games companies have produced some great games for the armchair fighter pilot, but they've also churned out a few turkeys. Their problem is that the subject is such a tough one to simulate, with its own unique characteristics. It's therefore worthwhile having a quick look at some of the pitfalls of aerial game design before looking at individual games.

EXOTIC SOLUTIONS

The first pitfall is that the sky is inconveniently three-dimensional, and the problem is how to represent this on a games table. Some exotic solutions have been found for this. For instance, a game from Airfix called **The Battle of Britain** used little plastic aeroplanes mounted on adjustable poles to show altitude. Unfortunately, this sort of gimmick is not very

practical and so most designers have since settled for showing the game board as if viewed from above, with some method of recording each aeroplane's height above the ground.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT

The next bugbear designers face is how to represent flight and movement on the game board. Aerodynamics being the horrific subject it is, I won't discuss it in detail except to point out a few things that a design should take into account. Firstly, energy (or 'speed' to you lot) is a fighter's prime requirement. If a fighter turns or manoeuvres it will lose speed, and if it loses all speed it will fall out of the sky. Therefore a pilot has to compromise between speed and the necessities of manoeuvring in battle. This is known as 'energy management' and a good game design should incorporate some approximation of this.

Turning ability is also important because inertia forces aircraft to describe circles in the sky. Since most games use squares or hexes to regulate movement, a game system must be able to define turn radii on this grid and show how some planes have a greater turning circle than others.

3-D PASSES

Then there is the sticky problem of how to show three dimensional movement on a two dimensional board. For instance, an aircraft flying straight down may seem to move nowhere on the game board and similarly, a climbing or diving plane can appear to describe a tighter turning circle than on the flat because it's also moving in the vertical. Even more difficult is the problem of representing manoeuvres such as half-loops and vertical rolls, which can change the apparent direction of a plane on a horizontal game board, even though it is actually flying straight up or down.

From this you can see that accurately representing flight in a game is far from easy, and to compound his troubles a designer must also find a playable, fluid system. After all, the end result of any design is a game that people play for enjoyment.

Therefore a balance between playability and accuracy must be found, making compromise essential.

Since we are talking about wargames, I must also mention the subject of combat here. Firing at a moving target from a moving platform with a machine-gun or cannon is no easy task. Not only do you have the problem of relative speed – which might only give you a fleeting shot at the target – but you also have to contend with deflection, which makes crossing targets hard to hit. Again, these are factors a design should incorporate.

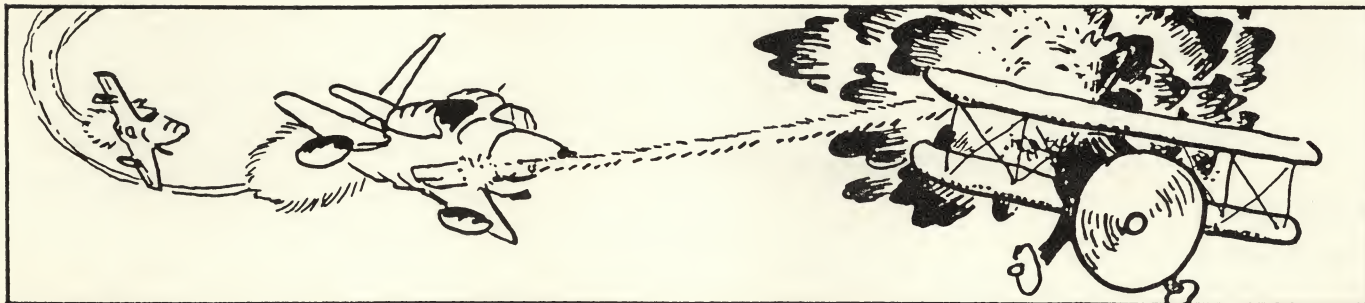
TIME AND MOTION

The last big problem for the designer is how he structures his game turns. This may appear to be a trivial matter, but think about it! Aircraft are dynamic, constantly moving objects and the traditional wargames method of Player A move then Player B move just won't work. After all, Player B is not going to obligingly hang about stationary in the sky whilst Player A creeps around behind and perforates him with machine-guns! Surprisingly, some games still use this sequential system although other methods are possible.

One of these is simultaneous movement, where players plot their aircraft moves secretly before moving together. Simultaneous movement does allow pilots to outguess each other and makes for an playable game mechanic, but it has its limitations.

Firstly, it can reduce the game to a lottery, with pilots throwing their planes around randomly in the hope that something will drift into their sights. Secondly, it doesn't account for tailing, where a fighter can react to the moves of the plane that it's following.

The advantage system is a better alternative to simultaneous movement. This is where aircraft are rated as to whether they are in a good position (advantaged) or bad position (disadvantaged) relative to each other, with the advantaged planes following the disadvantaged ones across the board. This advantage system does allow for tailing and the ability to react to other



aircraft, but it also makes it harder to out-guess one's opponents, placing a premium on outperforming them instead.

The main problem with the advantage system is that it doesn't work well where aircraft can change their direction very rapidly in a turn, so negating the disadvantaged penalty. This is one reason why fast-turning games, such as many First World War games, prefer to use a simultaneous movement system.

IMPULSIVE SOLUTION

A fourth method is the impulse system, where a game turn is split up into discrete segments, or 'impulses' in which the aircraft move proportionally according to speed. This might appear to be the most realistic approach to turn sequencing, but in fact it proves very unsatisfactory. Not only is it mind-numbingly tedious to play, but few movement systems can cope with being dissected in such a manner.

Now that we've looked at design, I'll take you on a personal sortie over some of the best (and worst) games, in historical order.

Contact! Chocks Away!

The First World War began with gentleman observers being chauffeured across the battlefield by sergeant pilots, spotting for artillery. This was all very pleasant until someone came up with the beastly idea of shooting back at them, thus giving birth to the ignoble art of air combat.

The aircraft they fought with were slow yet nimble, the pilots requiring quick reactions, brute strength and a marksman's eye to outfly and outfight their foe.

Over the years the First World War has proved to be one of the most popular periods of air wargaming. This is partly due to the colour and spectacle of the 'Flying Circus' era, and partly because of the baroque appeal of a war fought using a fledgeling technology.

SOPWITH

Sopwith has been a convention favourite for many years both as a quick 'fill in' game, and as an introduction for beginners. Each of the six players has a fighter which he moves across a hex map using a simple simultaneous movement system. He also plots any machine-gun fire for the turn, and if an enemy plane is in the plotted arc of its guns he will score hits according to range. If the enemy takes 12 hits they are shot down. In truth, there is little to be said about this game. It doesn't pretend to be a simulation as there are no altitude rules or performance differences between aircraft. However, it makes a fun, simple parlour game and you could do worse than spend your money on it.

*Published by Quantum Games. Price £11.95. ****

BLUE MAX

Possessed of the most beautiful counters I have seen in any game, **Blue Max** is similar to **Sopwith**. Played on a flat hex grid, **Blue Max** also ignores altitude. This is known as the 'skating penguins' approach 'cos they move, they got wings, but they ain't flying! Accuracy aside, this is another simultaneous movement system in which players plot moves according to the examples laid out on the performance charts. Eighteen different aircraft types are given, mainly fighters but including a couple of two-seaters. The simplicity and visual appeal of the game makes it very accessible to novice gamers although veterans may find that it palls after several playings. Still, it's another fun game to fill that odd half-hour and deserves a reprint.

*Published by GDW. Out of print. ****

RICHTHOFEN'S WAR

One of the earliest fighter games ever published, **Richthofen's War** can possibly be forgiven for the outdatedness of its design; however, that doesn't stop it from being a pretty poor game. With sequential movement and a silly flight system that doesn't even hint at energy

management, you might as well be moving formations of armoured cars across the board. The problem is that unlike **Blue Max** and **Sopwith** which don't pretend to be anything other than games, **Richthofen's War** also aspires to be a simulation. Not only does it fail miserably at this, but it's long since had its day and now deserves to be pensioned off.

Published by Avalon Hill. Price £14.95.

✱



FIGHT IN THE SKY

Even older than **Richthofen's War**, this venerable game comes chugging into my sights. Sadly, it only takes one burst on my typewriter to send it screaming down in flames! **Fight in the Sky** is a simple game in which the opposing aircraft are moved in a random order across a square gridded board. This is an awful flight system, bearing little resemblance to the laws of physics.

The combat is basic, too, failing especially to account for deflection. The one saving grace of this game is a neat tailing system in which aircraft select cards in order to guess what avoiding manoeuvre the tailed aircraft is going to perform.

If the tailing aircraft guesses incorrectly he is forced to move before his victim, un-

able to fire and with the possibility of overshooting. This clever idea deserves a good home, but not in this turkey.

*Published by TSR. Out of print. **

ACES HIGH

First published in *The Wargamer* #12 magazine, this little game has become a classic. In **Aces High**, British designer Jim Hind has boldly filched the system from Battleline's **Air Force** (see below), and dragged it kicking and screaming on to the Western Front. Aircraft fly using a simultaneous movement system, the neat trick here being that experienced pilots can save up part of their movement (known as **Ace Move**) until after everyone else has moved, thus allowing for tailing. Since there are five grades of pilot, each giving differing degrees of **Ace Move**, marksmanship and flying ability, the game gives a real sense of how much more important the man is than the machine. Furthermore, with dozens of performance charts for different aircraft, **Aces High** has unlimited scenario potential. Mr Hind kindly provides additional rules for artillery spotting, bombing, trench strafing and balloon busting, as well as many of the oddities of the period such as Garros Wedges (accidentally shoot your own prop off) and pistol fire. Despite the 'kitchen sink' approach to the design, the game is fun, fast and has a real period feel to it.

The magazine edition of **Aces High** proved so popular that an expansion set called **Blue Max** soon appeared, adding heavy bombers, ropy engine rules and some of the more exotic aircraft that served in Palestine. Since the magazine format couldn't now hold the game, 3W published it in a plush boxed set which has since gone out of print. This is one game that I fervently hope will appear on the store shelves again, but in the meantime it's a worthwhile buy if you can find a second-hand copy.

Published by WWW. Out of print.

RED BARON

Evidently unsatisfied with his **Aces High** design, Jim Hind decided to refine it further and published the result, **Red Baron**, in *Wargamer* #48. The system is precisely the same as **Aces High** except the board has been adapted from using a six-point facing hex grid to an eight-point facing square grid. As you would expect, flight is somewhat different on the new grid, the adaptation making the energy penalty for manoeuvre seem less than it

was in **Aces High**; however, the new addition is welcome and fans of the first game might well want to add this to their collection. I believe some copies of *Wargamer* #48 are still available in the UK from Games of Liverpool.

Published by WWW. Price £6.95.

ACE OF ACES

As a total departure from board wargames comes **Ace of Aces**. This two-player game consists of two soft-bound books, one for the Allies and one for the Hun. Each page in the book illustrates a pilot's-eye view of the opposing aircraft as if seen from the cockpit of the friendly fighter.

Each turn, the players secretly note their moves, and then reveal them before flipping the pages of their books to find the picture that shows their new relative positions. If it happens that one plane has the other in its sights, then the pictures show appropriately dramatic views of the guns spitting lead death at the enemy and hits are scored. This innovative system is not only beautifully simple, but it also puts the player truly in the pilot's seat!

However, while this game has been much fêted (and copied) I can't help feeling that, like **Blue Max**, it gets a little boring after a while. Sure, you can jazz the game up by playing with multiple opponents (using bookmarks) or by mixing book sets (there are books for early, rotary and powerhouse aircraft, each with different performance characteristics) but there's still not enough variation to prevent the game getting stale.

Anyway, despite my reservations this remains a great game and is especially recommended as an introduction to novices and non-gamers. Recently, a deluxe version of this game was produced. Called **Richthofen**, it comes in a boxed set with some additional campaign rules.

*Ace of Aces published by Nova. Price £15.95. Richthofen is printed under licence in the UK by Attactix, price £12.95. *****

WINGS

Designed by Craig 'Air Force' Taylor, this game was touted by many to be the most accurate and complete First World War air game ever. Certainly it is the most sumptuous, with gorgeous maps, attractive counters and charts for over 50 different aircraft types! Disappointingly, the game itself is a little more than a very

detailed version of the excellent **Aces High**. What is even more frustrating is the total failure of the designer to incorporate any tailing rules at all into the simultaneous movement system. This is a serious flaw that mars an otherwise good design. A follow-up expansion game was planned by the author but Yaquinto folded before this ever appeared.

Published by Yaquinto. Out of print.

KNIGHTS OF THE AIR

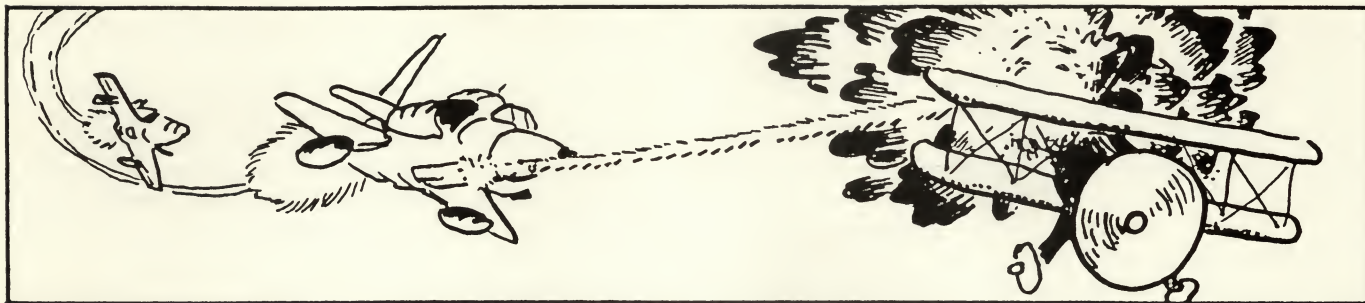
Avalon Hill's replacement for **Richthofen's War** fares a lot better than its predecessor. This is a very pretty game, with brightly coloured performance charts and a pack of attractive (but totally useless) cards illustrating the different manoeuvres. Performance cards for twenty-one different aircraft are given, although the cards and counter-mix are designed to allow no more than three aircraft per side in any game.

The heart of the game is a neat little variant of the advantage system in which players can 'target' the aircraft they wish to pursue. Furthermore, players are allowed to interrupt movement so as to force their opponents to fly proportionally in reaction. The timely use of this interruption can allow a pursuer to intercept his enemy or force him to overshoot. Unfortunately, this clever idea is let down by the cack-handed movement system; a poor approximation of flight that is fiddly to play. The result is that despite some good mechanics (including an excellent combat system that neatly incorporates relative speed and deflection) **Knights of the Air** is a slow and somewhat inaccessible game of dubious accuracy. This one is for *aficionados* only.

Published by Avalon Hill. Price £24.99.

Bally Jerry, pranged his kite right in the how's-your-father

Between the world wars the development of the warplane proceeded apace. New all-metal bombers could now fly for long distances at high speeds, and it was the opinion of many experts that these fast bombers would always get through. The Battle of Britain dispelled that theory, just



as the Spanish Civil War had shown everyone that the high speeds of the new fighters had not, as expected, ended the era of the dogfight.

The spectacle of massed air battles on a scale never seen before or since has made the Second World War a very popular subject for operational level games. It is a pity, therefore, that only a few tactical games have ever appeared.

SPITFIRE

Blessed with an evocative title, this is an odd game from the stable of Jim Dunnigan. *Spitfire's* flight system is basic to say the least and movement is sequential, which would normally spell disaster for the game. What makes it work here is that aircraft must fulfil fairly strict conditions before they can fire at an enemy plane (they must spend a third of their movement moving directly down a hex row toward their target). The result is a game that can be interesting to play, yet bears little similarity to reality. A minor game.

*Published by SPI. Out of print. ***

AIR FORCE

Originally published by Battleline, Craig Taylor's *Air Force* has been a firm favourite with gamers for many years. Its simple simultaneous movement system is straightforward to use and players are aided by detailed, well laid out performance charts for thirty-odd fighters and bombers. The system is robust enough have been used for the excellent First World War game *Aces High*. So, why do I have reservations about this game?

My first misgiving is that the simultaneous movement system doesn't suit the campaign. Second World War aircraft were faster and less nimble than their 'stringbag' predecessors so that positional advantage and energy were far more important to the pilots. An advantage system would reflect such tactics better. Second, the flight system doesn't represent the vertical dimension very well, forcing aircraft to perform most of their manoeuvring 'in the flat'. Energy tactics meant that the vertical was far

more important to Second World War fighter pilots than it was to those of the Great War. Yet the game treats altitude as little more than an elevator or a means to gain or lose speed, and not as a third plane of manoeuvre. My last big complaint is a combat system that is nothing short of ludicrous and does not reflect air-to-air gunnery at all. This is best done away with and replaced by something better.

It seems a shame that a game system that works perfectly well in the First World War period does not work for the Second World War. However, it must be stressed that a system should be tailored to the campaign it is simulating, and it is in this area that *Air Force* fails.

Following *Air Force's* success, *Battleline* produced two expansion games; *Dauntless*, which covered the war in the Pacific, and *Sturmovik*, which detailed the Eastern Front. Avalon Hill have since bought the rights to the game, reprinting *Air Force*, *Dauntless* and *Sturmovik* (under the name of *Dauntless Expansion*); however the *Dauntless Expansion* does not seem to have been available for a while.

Published by Avalon Hill. Price £17.99.



AIR BATTLES IN MINIATURE

Air warfare has never been a very popular subject for miniatures gaming. This is probably because of the lack of satisfactory rules that can take advantage of the visual benefits miniatures give. Of all the rules systems I have looked at, the only one that has ever shown any freshness or originality is Mike Spick's 'skirmish' rules which first appeared in *Airfix Magazine* over ten years ago.

What makes Mr Spick's rules so different is that he throws convention out the window and shows the battle from the *side* rather than from above. Declaring one edge of the tabletop as the 'ground', he cuts his aircraft miniatures (plastic kits are best) in half down the centre line and places them on the table so they are viewed in profile. The result is a visually exciting view of the battle in which the vertical and horizontal dimensions can be clearly seen. In his book *Air Battles in Miniature* Mike Spick explains the rules system and the compromises he had to make in the design. The author's breezy style is entertaining and teaches a lot about Second World War air warfare (incidentally, I recommend any of this author's books on the subject). The game itself is fast, simple and makes a fun convention game. Sadly, the book is out of print now and the publishers have no intention of reprinting as yet. Still, if you can find an old copy about anywhere then snap it up!

*Published by Patrick Stephens. Out of print. *****

All we want for Christmas is our wings swept back

The development of the air-to-air missile in the 1950s was thought (again) to have made the dogfight obsolete. The experts warned that future conflicts would be 'push-button' wars with long range missile duels between fighters. Cannons were even deleted from aircraft as it was

thought that they were no longer any use; that was until Vietnam showed the missiles' limitations. Air warfare had changed yet again as speed and technology made pilots less dependent on reactions and marksmanship, and more reliant on tactics and level headedness.

The macho glamour of fast jets has made modern air warfare a popular subject for designers. But having to represent the highly technical nature of jet-age planes with long range missiles and Electronic Countermeasures (ECM) has brought its own problems.

FOXBAT AND PHANTOM

Based on the Spitfire system, **Foxbat and Phantom** illustrates the 'push-button' approach to simulating missile weapons. Here, a player simply manoeuvres his planes and then rolls dice to see whether his missiles hit. No chance is given to avoid the missile as aircraft can do in real life, although factors such as ECM and turn rate act as modifiers.

Though this approach makes for a simple game mechanic, it doesn't simulate the way missiles really behave. The result is another minor game.

*Published by SPI. Out of print. ***

MIG KILLERS

Despite its cheap folio presentation, **MiG Killers** is a clever little game only let down by its combat system. Structured as an advantage system, this game provides a nice representation of flight with many good ideas. Energy management is crucial; accurately allowing all aircraft to turn at the same rate at any given speed, but applying different energy penalties dependent on aircraft type. Furthermore, turns are rated in 'gees', allowing a player to decide exactly how tight he wishes to turn, but applying a heavy energy penalty if he turns too tightly.

The combat system uses a 'push-button' approach, and this is where the game fails. It's frustrating to manoeuvre hard against an opponent, only to be unable to react to the plane that rolls lucky dice from twenty hexes away. It's a shame, because otherwise the game is quite good.

*Published by Lou Zocchi. Out of print. ****

AIR WAR

An innovative and complex game that was once rated as the most complete and accurate simulation of its subject, **Air**

War now looks a little clapped out. Its first innovation was to allow aircraft to fly in twelve directions on the hex grid rather than six, allowing for more subtle changes of heading. The second was to treat missiles like aircraft and manoeuvre them across the board, allowing the targets to outrun or out-turn them; a vast improvement on the 'push-button' approach. However, the main problem with the game was its scale; at 2.5 seconds a turn the time scale was too short for a plane to make any significant manoeuvres or heading change. A cumbersome flight system that hardly touched reality was another handicap and the result was a slow, involved game of unnecessary complexity.

*Published by TSR. Price £24.95. ***

TOP GUN

A rip-off product feeding on the popularity of the movie, the only notable features of this game are the christmas-cracker plastic aeroplanes they use for counters. The system itself is best described as a fast-jet version of **Sopwith**. 'Nuff said.

*Published by FASA. Price £8.95. ***



FLIGHT LEADER

This is a good example of how not to design an air wargame, which is a shame, because designer Gary Morgan (himself USAF aircrew) should know better. The game *looks* excellent. The components are of Avalon Hill's typically high quality, and the counters display a truly breathtaking variety of post-Second World War aircraft. Amazingly, nearly all the relevant performance data is squeezed on to

the counters, including turn rate, aircraft size, engine power, crew size, canopy type, radar, ECM, missile rails, gun type, blah, blah . . . Given that the game attempts to be a simple, playable simulation of air combat, the designer seems to have identified all the crucial elements of aircraft performance. But then the whole design goes horribly wrong.

Problem number one is the scale; at thirty seconds a turn and one kilometre a hex the scale is, quite frankly, far too large. At this scale aircraft travel very fast across the board and turn quite tightly.

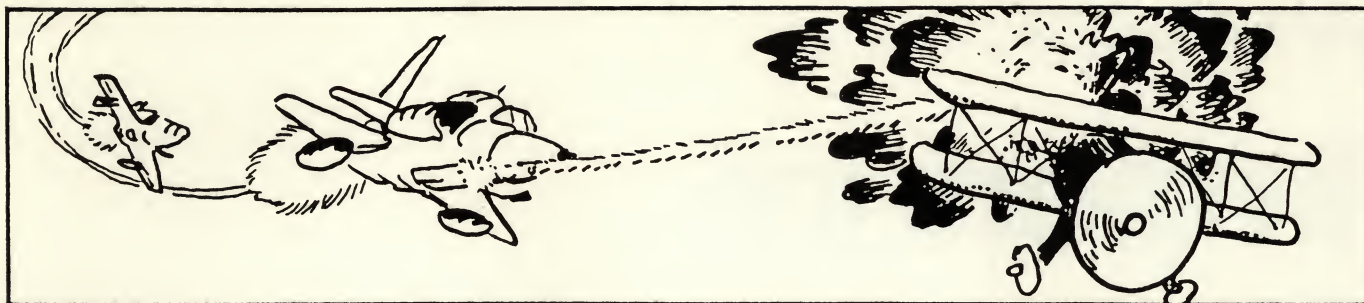
Furthermore, Gary Morgan actually overdoes the vertical plane, allowing the smallest change in altitude to decrease a fighter's turning circle radically. The result is that most aircraft can zip around the board quite quickly and turn on a dime. The scale also means that spotting ranges are quite short on the board, so that aircraft are often very close together before an engagement begins.

The second boob is an idiotic system of sequential movement where the highest, fastest aircraft gets to move first. This means that provided you have the height and speed advantage, you will usually have no problem zipping round behind the enemy to blow him away whilst he just hangs there, unable to react. Because of this, I have rarely seen a game last more than a few game-turns, with the ludicrous sight of both sides flying at maximum altitude and speed in order to get the first move.

Not only does this make for an awful game (who enjoys having their arse kicked without being able to fight back?) but also a poor simulation of dogfighting. Admittedly the designer tries to cure this problem by introducing an impulse system in the optional rules. Sadly he fails to realise that not only does this make play interminable, but the flight system malfunctions under this level of movement point-by-movement point scrutiny.

The game is certainly not helped by the 'push-button' combat system. Not only can aircraft not react to the movement of their opponents, but they are unable to react to missiles either and so must rely entirely on their opponent rolling bad dice.

The premise behind the game of a simple, smooth introduction to jet age air combat is a good one. Certainly the designer has identified the critical performance elements of combat aircraft and applied them to the game. But I still fail to comprehend how the game got through



playtesting despite the blatant faults that ruin it both a game and a simulation. The potential is there for a great game, but a few rule changes won't cure its problems. Instead, the entire system needs a complete overhaul to get it to work. I don't recommend this game at all unless you are prepared to spend a substantial amount of time re-jigging it.

Published by Avalon Hill. Price £18.99.

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AIR SUPERIORITY

Air Superiority is a superb design from the pen of another pilot. US Navy jet jockey J D Webster has, by his own admission, cribbed bits from previous air games for his design, but this ain't no bad thing. Certainly his rules are clear and concise and don't suffer from GDW's usual lack of editing.

Air Superiority uses an advantage system with all movement taking place on a hex grid. As in **Air War**, this game uses a twelve point turning system, neatly allowing aircraft to fly *along* hexsides. The flight system is excellent with its emphasis on energy management and the vertical is also well represented by the simple expedient of allowing aircraft to spend movement points climbing or diving. The result is a smooth, fast movement system that simulates flight about as well as you can given the constraints of the hex grid.

Combat is also straightforward, allowing players to fly missiles across the map using a bastardised version of the flight system. If the missiles catch up with their target the players then roll dice for hits and damage. My only complaint here is that missiles seem a mite too effective when attacking from the forward quarter (witness the US Navy/Libyan débâcle earlier this year when two Sparrow missiles missed a non-maneuvring target) but this could be cured by altering a few hit modifiers. Guns are also well handled with the emphasis on gunsight quality.

Technofreaks will be well pleased with this game, which adds in lots of extras to

account for the complexity of modern air warfare without overburdening the players too much.

For those who want to have a bash at the serious job of mud-moving, GDW have also produced **Air Strike**, which provides air defence and bombing rules. Unlike other games where a bombing system is often added as an afterthought, the **Air Strike** system is integral with the rest of the **Air Superiority** rules. Furthermore, ground attacks become fascinating games in their own right, with attackers battling against sophisticated air defences. For those wanting older aircraft than those portrayed in the first two sets, GDW have also published the **Desert Falcons** expansion which was reviewed in GI #4.

In short, **Air Superiority** is the best game yet produced on the subject. For me, the real measure of an air game is whether real-life tactics actually work in play, and here they most certainly do. Sure, it does have its faults, but these are more to do with the limitations of the format than design flaws and so I can wholeheartedly endorse this game to anyone interested in fighting with fast jets.

Both **Air Superiority** and **Air Strike** are published by GDW. Price £14.99 each.

I would like to thank Richard Clyne, Dave Farr, Gary Hellen, Games Gazette and Mike Hillan of Virgin Games for their assistance in writing this article. G

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STRATEGY SEMINAR

Imperium Romanum II



Gordon Sweeney

Imperium Romanum II is certainly my favourite multi-player wargame. Its combination of military campaigning, diplomacy, economics and, of course, luck is hard to beat. If this is your period, you won't find anything better. The strategy you adopt in this game will vary from scenario to scenario but there are a few tactics which serve equally well whether you're playing Julius Caesar conquering the Gauls or Justinian dealing it out to the Vandals 600 years later.

WINNING BY CHOICE

The easiest way of winning is to give yourself an unfair advantage at the start. The scenarios are designed to be historically accurate so there's no guarantee of

the sides being equal. The 'balanced' scenarios are just less unbalanced than the others. When there are four or more factions, one of them could be a real no-hoper. So, if you want to win you'd better choose carefully.

Picking the side that actually did come out on top will usually help you avoid too much embarrasment, although it may prejudice everyone else against you. Things to look out for when choosing are numbers of legions (or heavy cavalry when available), morale values, combat efficiency ratings

(CER), numbers of fleets and whether there are any +2 or +3 leaders (for amphibious invasions). There's no point in having a huge army if it's stuck in Africa without fleets to move it somewhere. If you pick a faction sandwiched between two others, you've got the opportunity of attacking one of them to gain morale points, income and even defecting troops. More often than not, though, your Emperor will be the first to go.

Your destiny in this game – to become Caesar or just another failed candidate for the purple – will probably hinge on the outcome of one pitched battle. Everything you do, do with the aim of giving yourself as much of an edge as possible when that battle finally comes. If you somehow end up with a lame faction you'll need to get someone else to do the

hard work for you. Make an alliance and while you pick up easy morale points by bashing any convenient neutrals, persuade your ally to launch a death or glory assault on the enemy. With luck the winner will have lost too many troops to stop you.

WINNING FROM BEHIND

Always remember the scenario end-date if there is one. If things go badly try to make yourself safe until then. If nobody else has a +2 or +3 leader, moving your Emperor to an island keeps him safe, unless he is struck down by the random events table (Jupiter forbid!).

Alternatively, if this isn't possible and the game is slipping away from you then don't build any more units; instead gather whatever forces you can and launch an all-out attack, making a large enough donative to get a morale bonus, and call for divine intervention. If you have even a one in six chance of winning a major battle it's worth the attempt as hopeless positions have a habit of becoming more hopeless the longer you wait.

THREE STEPS TO EMPIRE

Make full use of all your pieces. Be ready to take advantage of any errors your opponents make – there will be plenty. Set traps (such as an isolated 4-12 light infantry) to lure your enemies' stacks to apparently safe hexes where you can get them. There are three ways of getting troops to a hex which appears to be out of their range. If you move before two other players and ally yourself with whichever one moves last, then you will both move after the other player. As soon as the alliance is broken you will move first again, giving you two moves on the trot!

Secondly, by getting the player who goes before you to move a 4-12 light infantry near your army, you can intercept it (perhaps getting you two hexes nearer to

where you're really heading) and make a full move in your own turn. Finally, adding a replacement leader from the turn record track onto a stack (or moving one in with a fleet) enables you to force march that stack. Building a baggage train and then expending it costs you talents and four morale points but is well worth it if you can squash an enemy stack in the process. You can build one, carry it on a fleet and then move it again as long as the fleet doesn't spend more than 10 movement points. This will catch most people out, especially if you leave a couple of fleets around the board for this purpose.

When on the defensive, the most satisfying trick to play is to wait until a large enemy stack which is moving to attack you will be foraging from the clear terrain in your hex (or getting supplies from a port). Intercept the stack in a rough or marsh hex with enough cavalry to stop it retreating or with just a 4-12 if the surrounding hexes are the same terrain. Before you roll for your attack the enemy stack will lose up to two thirds of its strength as it is only able to forage from poor terrain.

If the circumstances don't favour this approach you may be forced to split a force into two or three stacks so you can retreat when you're attacked by a force which would otherwise surround you. If you're badly outnumbered in cavalry, leaving a protective shield of 4-12s might be your only way out. However, this would cost you a few morale points and be a gift for your opponent.

BUILDING YOUR ARMY

When it comes to the mobilisation phase, there are a number of important decisions to be made. Many scenarios end surprisingly quickly, so you need to decide whether to build your army up for the future or to use donatives to give a short term boost to morale. Troops become very expensive in the later scenarios so donatives are relatively more attractive then.

Almost always buy troops in the first mobilisation phase and in March turns when they are cheap. Militia, when available, are very good value as they are cheaper per point than other units, they can be used anywhere in their province and require no seasoning or training. In addition, you never need to lose more of them than necessary to satisfy combat losses and other players never gain morale points for eliminating them.

If you own a province in a shared mobilisation area, buy as many units as you can

there or there will soon be none left for you. It is common for the pool of legions and archers to dry up by June of each year. Remember to move leaders to those provinces you intend to raise troops from and don't forget that you can raise a 4-12 in each province not listed on the mobilisation table.

SEA WAYS

As the board is dominated by the Mediterranean, it should be no surprise that fleets in *Imperium Romanum II* are extremely powerful. They can transport units over huge distances and are a deadly threat if able to make amphibious invasions. Any player without them is at a great disadvantage. Unfortunately, they are very expensive and time consuming to build. In addition since cities offer no refuge from naval combat they are vulnerable to stronger neighbours.

So, if you have naval supremacy, ruthlessly seek out and destroy any enemy fleets you can. If not, either make a deal, pack your bags and sail out of the Med or load up with legions, archers and a good leader and have a go. Unlike in land combat, at sea you can regularly lose your Emperor without fear of losing him.

Although weak in land combat, fleets can be handy for blocking enemy retreat routes. Make a habit of ending your turn in a port, enabling you to make interceptions stay at sea next turn if necessary. Don't leave land units embarked on fleets if winter might start next turn. If it does, you'll have to leave them there until summer or spend 2 movement points with your fleets risking attrition.

NEUTRAL POWERS

Most scenarios involve several neutral powers, both civilised and barbarian. Any of these which you control can be a great help to your ambitions. It's tempting to plough straight into the nearest Roman faction with them as your major power can't suffer any morale loss. This could be a mistake though – they are likely to take a beating in a straight fight and give morale to an opponent. They can be more effectively used as a threat to tie down enemy forces. It is worth attacking lone legions however – you might still lose but destroy the legion in the process.

When fighting a powerful barbarian neutral, one approach is to defend all your cities strongly and leave no weak spots. This forces the barbarians to make suicide attacks or lose five morale per turn. Also they don't accumulate replacement points until they've lost something.

When you're ready to launch your big push, make the necessary donative and go in with an extra +1 on your attack die. To really stir things up in the game, use units of a neutral you currently control to activate other neutrals. Although you'll need to keep occupying any barbarian neutrals' provinces with units, this can rapidly release fresh hordes of invaders onto an unsuspecting foe.

As the game finally nears its conclusion, bear in mind the rules on power dissolution. If you are about to kill an enemy Emperor rush cavalry units into that player's provinces so they will defect to you rather than somebody else. If you are the one about to meet the gods, moving pieces towards someone who's not attacking you so he/she would gain them if you were eliminated could be a sufficient deterrent to keep you alive for a while. If not it's probably the best you could do to annoy your assailant.

If despite my advice (or because of it) and your excellent play, everything goes horribly wrong then take it like a Roman – get even next time! **G**

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REVIEWS

role games

TRANS-DIMENSIONAL TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

DESIGNED BY
ERICK WUJCIK

PUBLISHED BY
PALLADIUM BOOKS

PRICE £5.95



Yes, you're right, we should have found somebody who's a fan of the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* comic to review this game. Unfortunately (and perhaps this is a reflection of the relative popularity of *TMNT* in the States and over here) we couldn't find one, so you'll have to settle

for the prejudices of a dyed-in-the-wool *Cerebus* addict instead.

And now, the introduction for those of you unfamiliar with comic-speak: *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* is a best-selling funny-animal comic from the US. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* is also a best-selling rolegame written by fan favourite Erick Wujcik and published by Palladium Books. *Transdimensional TMNT* is the sixth supplement for the game, so you certainly can't accuse Palladium of failing to supporting their products. As you might expect, by the sixth supplement the ideas are getting quite way out (though you shouldn't take this as suggesting that there weren't some fairly way out ideas in the first book).

In short, the 112 page book is primarily concerned with rules on time travel: skills to allow characters to function in any period of history or prehistory, devices, characters and adventures.

Like most supplements of this kind, the contents are mostly in the form of rules and tables, and their value depends entirely on the kind of game you like. If you turned to *TMNT* because you'd gone

through *D&D* from *Basic* to *Immortals* and you were looking for new gimmicks, then this will satisfy you. If, on the other hand, you turned to *TMNT* because it was a quirky setting for a game with ample opportunity for extreme characterisation, then you might not be so keen to sling in new rules and settings a gogo.

Transdimensional TMNT also contains some of the same strangeness that characterised the original game. In that, the damage of small sub-machine guns seemed to be determined by how friendly the manufacturing nation is to the USA, rather than by their power. In *Transdimensional TMNT*, the 'Foreign and Sports Cars' section informs us that Porsche is an Italian company, and that Deloreans are Irish (presumably a reference to them being built in Northern Ireland, which, whatever your sympathies in the struggles, is currently part of the United Kingdom).

Don't be misled by the star rating for this product. It succeeds admirably at what it tries to do. However it will only be of interest to players of the *TMNT* game.

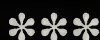
Paul Mason

CONKLIN'S ATLAS OF THE WORLDS

DESIGNED BY
FRANK CHADWICK

PUBLISHED BY
GDW

PRICE UNKNOWN



Yes, *Space: 1889* was certainly a fine idea for a game. What a shame that the product which emerged from that idea was so pedestrian. Still, having been 'The

biggest thing in rolegames' for 1989, it is being heartily supported. *Conklin's Atlas* is the latest in a line of support material which takes the game down all the familiar alleyways you most expected. In its favour I have to say that it is one of the most interesting-smelling games I've encountered. But the real question here is how indispensable *Conklin's* is to the dedicated explorer of the nineteenth century.

First off, being called an Atlas, it's worth looking at the Maps part of this 'Handy Manual of Useful Information'. The maps of Mars and Venus will be familiar to purchasers of the original game, but here they contain additional information: for example The Riches of Mars, The Flora and Fauna of Venus and so on. There is also a representative section of Mercury, following the World River which marks the centre of the narrow, inhabitable Twilight Zone.

Elsewhere, more detail is provided. Five pages of 100-miles-to-a-hex maps of Venus are among the most unattractive hex maps I've seen, and the lack of numbers diminishes their usefulness. On the other hand, the colour maps of Africa and two areas of Mars are striking – perhaps even pretty. The remaining maps are mostly of Earth: Europe's map features all those romantic little imaginary Balkan states like Ruritania (I would have liked to have seen Freedonia, myself, but as the game is set several years before the heyday of Marxism it's not a fair groucho). Most emphasis is placed on Africa as a suitable place for exploration and adventure, though South America and South East Asia also get some treatment. The Luna of the Moon Men (introduced in *Tales from the Ether*) is also mapped and a few token tables provided for adventures set there. The remaining maps are of small scale settlements, or of the solar system (including an interesting

chart showing the turbulent 'ether wakes' following planets).

The maps are backed up with interesting facts which are intended to be useful or atmospheric. The introduction suggests that the function of *Conklin's* is to provide a sourcebook for referees planning their own scenarios: a worthy goal. As a result, much of *Conklin's* is dry history or tables, and I feel this could profitably have been leavened with a few more atmosphere generators: facsimile documents and accounts.

As it is, we have a brief chronology of the years from 1879, background on some of the exotic species, profiles on world nations with some possible adventure ideas, steamship travel and rules for ship combat, just to demonstrate that the pointless American obsession with conflict extends to this book, too.

Conklin's is far better than *Tales from the Ether*, and is well worth getting if you are running a *Space: 1889* campaign. However, I still feel that the game is too much facts, and not enough flair.

Paul Mason

CHARTS

Rolegames

- ① AD&D 2nd Ed DM's Guide (TSR)
- ② AD&D 2nd Ed Player's Handbook (TSR)
- ③ Shadow World (Rolemaster, ICE)
- ④ COACC (MegaTraveller, GDW)
- ⑤ Journey to the Magic Isle (Rolemaster, ICE)
- ⑥ FRE1 (AD&D, TSR)
- ⑦ Rolemaster Companion 3 (ICE)
- ⑧ Earth-Cybertech (2300, GDW)
- ⑨ GM's Kit (MegaTraveller, Digest Group)
- ⑩ The New Hope (Star Wars, West End)

Chart supplied by Virgin Games.

JAPAN FEATURE

Other Nippons

Paul Mason

Bushido (covered last issue) is the only purpose-designed Japanese game, but there are alternatives. The possibilities of the setting have inspired designers to produce Japanese supplements for other, established, games.

Oriental Adventures

The application of the D&D philosophy to an oriental game had predictable results. Since the background in D&D is hidden within the rules rather than made explicit, serious amendments to the game would have been necessary to

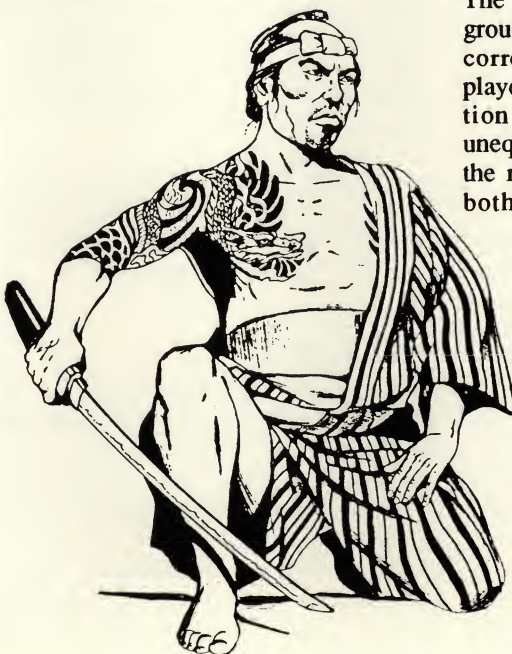
make it work. The changes made were all superficial, and the hodge-potch manner in which any and all oriental sources were drawn on simply helps to perpetuate the offensive myth that the Japanese, Chinese and other oriental cultures are all the same. D&D flung together Celtic, Norse, Greek and other mythologies in order to achieve its particular blend, but it never pretended to capture the atmosphere of a background the way *Oriental Adventures* does.

The game features a number of character classes, including three types of fighter that are really the same thing (Bushi, Samurai and Kensai). Shukenja are described as wandering priests or monks (nonsense, as any player of *Bushido* could tell you). Wu Jen are the sorcerers of *Oriental Adventures'* world, but bear little resemblance to the Chinese shaman sorcerers from whom the name was taken. Their elemental magic uses five elements, but for some inexplicable reason stone replaces metal.

The rules for player character background are to be praised in that they correct the AD&D habit of having player characters with no history or relation to society. However, they are unequivocally Japanese. If so much of the rules set is devoted to Japan, why bother to slap in the incompatible Chinese and South East Asian details?

The Martial Arts rules also contain some material of interest. Martial Artists may develop their own styles, and use special manoeuvres to add a little zest to combat. This section suggests that one of the authors of this game was reasonably knowledgeable about martial arts.

Despite these few good points, the game is certainly the worst



presentation of a Japanese rolegame yet produced and, I suspect, is bought principally by jaded D&Ders looking for new monsters and gimmicks to put in their games.

Published by TSR, price £9.95. *

Land of the Rising Sun

A decade ago *Chivalry & Sorcery* was one of the big rolegames. Its complexity and emphasis on simulation appealed to a particular kind of gamer. Ten years later that kind of gamer is more interested in *Warhammer*, *Rolemaster* or the *Palladium RPG* than poor old C&S. In its heyday, however, C&S spawned a number of fascinating supplements (such as the bizarre *Saurians* – a game in which you play the rôle of a prehistoric dinosaur). *Land of the Rising Sun* was greeted with some interest by C&S fans, principally because it made the first edition rules a little more comprehensible. Unfortunately, it doesn't retain much interest beyond this, for its 150+ pages are mostly filled with charts and tables. *Bushido* contains far friendlier, and more comprehensive treatment of the background – indeed it almost seems as if Lee Gold wrote the book on the assumption that its purchasers already owned the most popular Japanese game around.

In its favour, *Land of the Rising Sun* is pretty comprehensive. Like C&S, it contains such esoterica as lists of substances used in magic (from ginseng to moxa to Fuji lava), and a detailed magic system which rewards effort, even if it is a little too ponderous to capture the mystique of the eastern sorcerer. It's out of print, but can be obtained if you know where to look or advertise. Recommended only to C&S freaks and Japan completists. Otherwise you'd be better off with the same author's supplement for *GURPS*.

Published by FGU. Out of print. **

Land of Ninja

Just to reinforce the impression that writing Japanese rolegames is the exclusive province of a select few, Bob Charrette (co-author of *Bushido*) teamed up with *Call of Cthulhu* writer Sandy Petersen to produce *Land of Ninja*, which could also be referred to as *RuneQuest 3* in Nihon. While some of his enthusiasm seems to have been sapped (understandable when you're treading old ground), Charrette's work has been presented in a clear, efficient format, and for those who are addicted to *RuneQuest* this is clearly the logical choice. Unfortunately the treatment of magic and religion suffers from



the use of the *RuneQuest* rules, for *RQ* is by no means a generic system. As in *Oriental Adventures* the five elements are inexplicably altered (here 'The Void' replaces metal), and the *RuneQuest* cult system encourages the usual commercial rolegame obsession with the (historically uncommon) idea of worshipping only one deity of a pantheon.

In its favour, *Land of Ninja* boasts a scenario book which will set you up with a campaign and several good plot ideas. In this respect it might be a worthwhile purchase for the referee who plans to run a Japanese game using other rules. It also features the best bibliography of all the Japanese games, a bibliography which includes non-fiction, fiction and films. Finally, it is also the best-produced of the all the Japanese games.

Published by The Avalon Hill Game Company. Printed in the UK by Games Workshop. Price £10.99 for the GW book, £12.50 for the AH box. ***

GURPS Japan

Lee Gold's second Japanese rolegame is set later in Japan's history than *Land of the Rising Sun*. Of all the Japanese games, it is the one which deals most thoroughly with the possibilities of a game in which the clash of cultures is examined: material is presented for a campaign set when the black ships arrived in Japan. Thus this is probably the best choice for *Shogun* fans!

GURPS Japan features a few optional rules to tailor *GURPS* to the setting. Advantages and Disadvantages are provided to integrate characters into Japanese society. Similarly, skills appropriate to the culture are added to those in *GURPS* along with modifications to existing skills. The *Chambara* fighting style is described: an optional rule to allow games to simulate the flashy swordplay with which we are familiar from movies. There are also rules for mass combat, and deciding how well a player character performed in a battle.

The Japanese background is about as thorough as that of any of the other games, and the traditional *GURPS* sidebars feature many interesting cultural notes.

Finally, *GURPS Japan* manages to get the five elements right! However its magic suffers slightly from being a modification to the Western *GURPS Fantasy* system (the book refers to *GURPS Fantasy* rather than *GURPS Magic*, but owners of the latter should have no trouble making the appropriate amendments). Although it isn't quite as comprehensive as *Land of Ninja*, *GURPS Japan* is good value for money.

Published by Steve Jackson Games. Price £5.95. *** G

ON FILM

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SAMURAI BANNERS

KWAIDAN

BALLAD OF NARAYAMA

JAPAN FEATURE

Kamikaze

Dave Morris

The depressing thing about all the Japan-based rolegames on the market is that they show proliferation but no diversity.

The basis for choosing one game over another is simply the rules system you prefer, not its merit as a sourcebook. The source material may be well or badly presented, more or less detailed, but what you are getting is all much the same stuff. The cultural level of the setting, give or take a hundred years, is identical for all these products. Even **Bushido**, which for a number of reasons is the best of the bunch, pays only lip service to the idea of delving back further than the Muromachi Period. One argument is that this is the Japan most people are familiar with from books and films, so it's the period games should focus on. Familiarity has the advantage of giving players vivid access to the game setting, but it often leads to mediocrity.

PRECIOUS CHAUVINISM

The approach to Japan in rolegames is too often characterised by a kind of cultural chauvinism. This applies even when (often especially when) the author is a real Japan-buff. Reading Barker on the subject of *Tékumel*, or Stafford on *Glorantha*, you have the feeling that these guys are really inside the skin of their world. They describe it like natives. But take almost any of the Japan games on the subject of honour, for instance. Despite superficial differences, all societies with warrior élites have had a similar – usually unwritten – code, often revised as a historical afterthought into a 'Way of the Warrior'. This factor is firmly rooted in the socio-economics of the system. The reason why *samurai* have this reputation for spotless honour is because Japan's high feudal period went on longer than ours.

It is pointlessly precious to see it as all so exotic and alien – the tales of *samurai*

self-sacrifice would be perfectly comprehensible to the poet of *The Battle of Maldon*. Yet by rooting the concept of honour directly in the game mechanics, the designers of these games seem to be assuming that there is no way anyone could understand a *samurai's* mind-set – no way to role-play one.

TALES OF JONIN AND SHURIKEN

Oriental magic is treated in a way which suggests that the designers have never taken a step back and considered the overall picture. In making a reality out of fantasy Japan, there is no value in admiring elements of the mundane.

The modern myth of *ninja*, for example, is of these wiry little sneak thieves with balaclavas and rubber boots. For the modern world you can see why that has to be so. We can believe no end of nonsense about families of superb martial artists who could contort through tiny spaces by dislocating their limbs, run incessantly without tiring, stay underwater for hours, and so on. All these stories are pure fantasy, but it is fantasy that the 20th Century still has room for.

However, given the freer scope of a magical setting it would be possible to do much more with the *ninja*. If you read old Japanese fairy-tales it is quite clear that famous '*ninja*' like Nikki Danjo are thought of more like witches. The designers have missed a golden opportunity by not making worthwhile use of these Night-Wizards. Instead they prefer to rehash the tired old themes of a dozen comic books and bad movies.

KAMI SOAP OPERA

Also missing is any sense of the enormously powerful rural folk tradition running through almost all Japanese myth. This is virtually the key to understanding what Shinto is really about, and it does not require any great leap of imagination.

The Romans thought along similar lines when describing their deities and spirits, and paganism (in the original sense of peasant folk belief) is particularly alive in


the collective unconscious of the English. It ought to be second nature to do this kind of thing properly, but instead we are likely to get a straightforward list of Kami including where they all live, how many hit points – and just about stopping short of what they like to do at weekends! Well, this is not what Shinto is about and it simply turns a robust, vital myth-concept into so much rules fodder. I am not at all against fabulous beasts and so forth – they are a part (though not an overwhelming part) of the tradition. But they should be described as fabulous – like something out of a dream, out of the Land of Roots.

For the medieval Japanese, the invisible world was never far away and it was the subject of both fascination and dread. If more designers read Lafcadio Hearn instead of James Clavell, I've a feeling the games would be better at evoking this.

SOURCES

What do you need to run a Japanese rolegame? None of the products on the market, certainly. They are worse than useless. Instead, read any one book by Stephen Turnbull; these are usually called things like *The Book of the Samurai* or *Samurai Warriors*. Depending on the period chosen you will also need a nuts-&-bolts book such as *Everyday Life in Traditional Japan* or *The World of the Shining Prince*.

Apart from that you need only common sense and some casual reading to imbue the campaign with texture and feeling. (Lafcadio Hearn's books are excellent; the *Penguin Anthology of Japanese Literature* is beautiful; Henri Joly's *Legend in Japanese Art* is definitive; the fiction of Akutagawa and Tanizaki is disturbing and brilliant. Beyond this, and the occasional glance at a Kuniyoshi print (such as the one used to head this feature last issue – Ed), you need nothing.)

My advice to anyone thinking of a Japanese campaign is simple. Run it with whatever rule system your group uses and favours. By depriving the games companies of custom, by refusing to buy the duff old rubbish they pass off as 'sourcebooks', you will ultimately force them to produce better products. 

Free classifieds

GAMES CLUBS

UK

BLACKROD Wargames Society have regular fortnightly meetings. All types of games are played including historical figure wargames, fantasy role-playing games and all types of board games. New members are welcome with or without any previous experience. For further details contact: Trains & Things, 170/172, Chorley New Road, Horwich, Nr Bolton, Lancs. ☎ 0204 669203 or 691895.

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GLC (R.I.P.) Wargames Club meets alternate Wednesdays and Thursdays (May 3, 11, 17, 25, 31) in room 88, County Hall, on the South Bank, SE1 (nearest tubes Embankment and Waterloo). 6.30 till 10.00pm. Miniatures, two player board wargames, **Warhammer 40k**, **Pax Britannica**, **1830**, etc.

KCFFRPG, North London, have meetings every Monday, from 6.30pm to 9.45pm. If you're human, elf, dwarf or just about any other race, and you're between 16 and 25, then contact us straight away. We play **AD&D**, **Rolemaster/MERP**, **Marvel Superheroes**,

Robotech, **Call of Cthulhu** and other games. Experienced and non experienced players welcome. Contact Bil, Naomi or Vince ☎ 01-253 6776. Or write to Darren Rogers, c/o KCFFRPG, 92 Central Street, London EC1V.

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NOTTINGHAM AND DERBY Games Club meets every Thursday at the Queens Walk Community Centre, The Meadows, Nottingham. 7-10.30pm. Contact Mick Haytack ☎ 0332 511898.

SIGMA GAMES CLUB meets every 2nd, 4th, and 5th (if applicable) Sunday of the month at the Intersarsity Club, Bedford Chambers, King St. Covent Garden, London. 3-10.30pm. Games played include **Empire Builder**, **Talisman**, **Titan**, **1830**, and many more.

GERMANY

SPIELRATZN at the Gross Wirt pub every other Friday. Winthstr. Munich 19, Germany. For further details contact: Bernd Brunnhofer ☎ 089 264150.

FANTASY WORLD Role Playing Club in Munich. For more info contact Detlov Motz, Vorholzerstr. 4, 8000 Munich 71. ☎ 089 795244.

SMALL ADS

AREA PBM: New to AREA PBM (1500). Want to play **The Battle of The Bulge '81** and later **PanzerBlitz** (or other AH games). Write to Stein Surland, Svalevelen 24, N-3030 DRAMMEN, Norway.

PLAYERS NEEDED for Jorune and Tékumel role-playing campaigns (no experience of worlds necessary). Must enjoy role-playing for the imaginative creation involved rather than monster bashing, puzzle solving etc. Emphasis on characterisation, freeform acting and (supposedly) atmosphere. Semi-ruleless owing to GM incompetence. Both GMs very willing to play in other people's games of a similar style. 15+. No ageists, sexists, racists etc. Write to David Castle, April Cottage, Prey Heath Close, Woking, Surrey GU22 0SP.

WANTED DESPERATELY, any issues of *Games & Puzzles*, *Gamer*, *Games Gazette*. James ☎ 0904 704595 after 7pm.

WANTED DESPERATELY: Waddingtons **Starships** and other old games. Rudolf Rühle, Burgweg 33, D5300 Bonn1.

GO - oriental boardgame. British Association, membership: Brian Timmins, The Hollies, Wollerton, Market Drayton, Salop TF9 3LY. ☎ 063084 292.

OVER 300 games for sale, one copy of each. Send large sae for list to J Humphries, 23 Calder Court, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 7NB.

WANTED: Games enthusiasts, Bournemouth area. Prefer strategy games but anything interesting considered. Possibility of forming club. Please contact John Johnstone, 18 Hood Crescent, Bournemouth BH10 4DD. ☎ 0202 518245.

FOR SALE: *Games & Puzzles* 1-34, *Miniature Warfare* vols 14, *War Monthly* 150. Offers: D Wilson, 15 Chester Way, Boston, Lincs.

ANYONE INTERESTED in starting a Sheffield games club, possibly to play every other week. Howard, ☎ 0742 462469

SPIELBOX

Bi-monthly German language games review magazine. Send DM 54.- (plus DM 9.80 if you want it sent air mail) for a one year - six issue - subscription to: Huss-Verlag GmbH, Joseph-Dollinger-Bogen 5, Postfach 46 04 80, D-8000 München 46, West Germany.

GAMES INVENTOR requires contract with games company. *All Year Round Games*, 5 Syracuse Avenue, Rainham, Greater London RM13 9SR.

WANTED: collector's edition **D&D**, Judges Guild **D&D/AD&D** adventure supplements, *Dragon* magazines numbers 17, 11, 16, 31, 89, 99, 128. Richard Brown, 299 Beverley Road, Hull, Humberside HU5 1LG

DISTRIBUTORS

and retail stockists wanted in all countries except Britain and Germany, for **Railway Rivals** maps and other games: Rostherne Games (GI), 102 Priory Road, Milford Haven SA73 2ED, UK. ☎ 06462 2752

BIRMINGHAM DM/Players seek non-racist, non-sexist **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons** players in West Midlands. Age 16+. ☎ 021-551 1679

CONVENTION DIARY

UK

MANORCON, July 7-10, 1989 at High Hall, Birmingham University. Host to the Universities Diplomacy tournament. Also other boardgames and a dash of sport. £6 registration and £14 B&B. Contact Richard Walkerdine, 13 Offley Road, Hitchin, Herts SG5 2AZ.

SENSATIONCON '89. August 11-13, 1989 at Forbes Hall, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. Boardgames and sports games - no fantasy. Weekend ticket £8. One-day tickets £4. Contact: Ellis Simpson, 95 Ormonde Crescent, Netherlee, Glasgow G44 3SW. ☎ 041-637 0530 (evenings).

DRAK CON '89. August 12-13, 1989 at the College Dining Room, Northern College of Education, Hilton Drive, Aberdeen. Events include AD&D and Railway Rivals tournaments. All proceeds to famine relief. For details, SAE to S Douglas, 13 Springbank Terrace, Aberdeen, Scotland AB1 2LS.

CLANCON IV, August 18-21, 1989 near Belfast. Small scale, good fun, plenty of the *real* amber nectar. Details from Gordon McDonald, Benbecula, 3 Taylor Park, Scroggy Road, Lismavady, Co Londonderry BT49 0NT. ☎ 0547 64328

DIPLOMACY PLAYERS. Can you match the best? Ninth Annual British Diplomacy Championships, November 4-5, 1989. £100 first prize. Limited entry so register now. For details, SAE to Brian Williams, 30 Rydding Lane, West Bromwich B71 2HA.

CAMPAIGN 90. May 12-13, 1990 at Waughton Campus, Milton Keynes. Contact Dean Bass, 14 Skeats Wharf, Pennyland, Milton Keynes MK15 8AY.

CONJUNCTION. July 27-29, July 1990 at New Hall College, Cambridge. Relaxed rolegame convention organised like an SF con rather than a selling exercise. Probably similar to the late, lamented KoanCon. Contact Conjunction, c/o Wycliffe Road, Cambridge CB1 3JD.

EUROPE

SPIEL '89, the Essen Games Fair with expanded interteam tournament, at the Gruganhalle, Essen from the October 17-22, 1989.

NORTH AMERICA

ATLANTICON, July 20-23, 1989 at the Hyatt Regency, Baltimore. More details next issue.

DIP-CON XXII. America's biggest Diplomacy tournament. For further details contact Larry Peery, PO Box 8416. San Diego CA 92102 USA. ☎ 619 295 6248.

LETTERS

Crawler?

The answer to Sniper's competition in issue 5 is clearly Lenny Henry, and I claim my prize of yet another crap trivia game.

If I'm not an employee then I must be a 'hanger-on'. But what I want to know is: where are all the groupies?

Not-James-Wallis-honestly-no
Tottenham, London

In the editors' office, of course.

Adult mag

Congratulations on a superb magazine. Unlike your nearest rival, *GRM*, you have the balance between the various types of games just right. Although I have no interest in wargames whatsoever, and only a passing interest in rolegames, there is still more than enough in your magazine to keep me interested. Furthermore, you seem to be aiming GI at an adult market, which is good. Being a keen games player at the ripe old age of 30 seems to provoke the same reaction in people as that reserved for grown men saying they're into model trains or flying kites or something: a kind of 'Very nice, but shouldn't you be into something more *adult*?' reaction.

I feel that the only way you could perhaps improve the magazine slightly, would be to encourage your readers to send in games that they have designed, along the lines of *Games & Puzzles* forum article. Let's face it, a keen gamer will play anything, whether it's a card game, pencil and paper game or a Blue Peter DIY board game!

N Holliday

Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL7 1DU

Metric mail

Responding to the editorial comment prompted by the publication of Mr Appleton's letter in issue 6 that 'generally manufacturers prefer not to deal with the public direct', following as it did directly after a mention of our product *The Metric Mile*, I would like to point out that whilst that statement is undoubtedly true of many organisations it does not apply to Lambourne Games. Several (enterprising and discerning!) retailers do stock our range of sports replay games but we do operate a swift and efficient mail order service, and we are always happy to deal

REBOUND



Write to: *Games International*, Lamerton House, 23a High Street, Ealing, London W5 5DF

direct with the public by post or telephone.

Congratulations on the quality of your magazine, and the wide range of your articles and reviews. Long may you prosper!

T R Goodchild

Lambourne Games
Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 8BJ

Roboflop

I am writing with reference to issue 6 of *Games International* with which I have a major complaint. My complaint involves your so-called 'review' of *Robotech II*. Not only were you three months behind everybody else, but what there was was absolute garbage.

The first point raised by the reviewer was about a lack of information about the background. Shall I let you into a little secret here . . . *Robotech* is American. That shocked you, didn't it? (*No - Ed*).

I have been a *Robotech* fan for some time now, and I have taken the trouble to search out the background material. There are, for your information, the following items available: 17 novels, four series of comics, three information books, several videos and more as well as the game. This stuff is largely available from shops such as Forbidden Planet.

So you don't like the format? So what! Personally I do not wish to have to spend an extra £5 for a hardback game (à la Games Workshop) when I can get it in softback version - or are you going to

have a go at Palladium for trying to make the game affordable?

The book, incidentally, is a complete game, just as *The Sentinels* is a complete story. That is why it is dubbed *Robotech II*. The original *Robotech* saga consisted of three stories (*Macross*, *Masters* and *Mospeada*) which went under the banner of *Robotech*.

'The rules themselves aren't too brill' summed up over 100 pages of the book. Wow - is that informative or what? Just why aren't the rules brill? No answer . . . what a surprise. Do you know what a review is?

Finally you close by accusing Mr Siembieda of 'PROPAGANDA' - this is from the magazine dubbing themselves (sic) 'the journal of fun and games' and sporting a cover depicting an anti-apartheid game.

Whilst on that point, all the advertising about 'human rights', 'shooting people in the back' and 'people caring' should have been dumped bearing in mind the slaughtering of people on a scale unseen for decades in China. At the very least this could have been delayed!

D A Segal

Burpham, Surrey GU4 7JP

This letter was edited because it was extremely boring.

Nostalgia corner

First off, I'd like to say that I think GI is a great magazine - well done.

I guess I'm more in the 'General Games' camp, and I agree with Rev Duncan Myers (*Rebound*, #6) - more info on general games and less rolegames for me; there must surely be other publications widely covering D&D and the like?

Recent faves have been *Grass*, *Mad*, *Travel Go* and *Risk!*. The photo of the *Formula One* board brought the memories flooding back. My set, though a bit depleted now, is about twenty years old. I also have a Waddingtons *Travel Go* set of a similar age - recently introduced to some friends who've really enjoyed it.

But *Risk!* is still the tops. I recently found what I believe to be an original copy of the Waddingtons rules. We've also discovered that there have been about six different rules published over the years - each with subtle differences - anyone else noticed this?

Also, I recently saw the film *Dune* and am reading the book. I've never seen a *Dune* game, but I would think it would make an ideal game – anyone know if one exists?

Once again, a great magazine – keep it up. Just one suggestion: how about a 'Great Games of the Past' section – **Risk!**, **Travel Go**, **Scoop**, **Cluedo**, **Wembley**, **Totopoly** etc. Great for nostalgia freaks!

David N Cohen
No address given.

In response to your points:

- 1) *We aim to reach the parts of rolegames other magazines cannot reach.*
- 2) *There is an excellent game published by Avalon Hill, based on the Dune legend.*
- 3) *Our R.I.P section should satisfy nostalgia freaks.*

On the war-path

Thank you for the detailed review by Ellis Simpson of my **Peninsular War** game in issue 5. Though in parts unfavourable, any review is always appreciated. However, there are several points I would wish to comment on:

1. The price is £6, not £7.95. While no doubt it's worth more than £7.95, by exaggerating the price by a third you give

a misleading idea of the value for money it represents.

2. It's *not* intended for wargamers. I would have thought this was obvious from its presentation, and my catalogue clearly states this. Unfortunately, the final grading (only two stars) is based on the wargamers' view.

3. The second half of the review *does* give the opinions of the intended customers. For them 'it was a hit!'; they 'liked the simple rules . . . the coloured wood pawns, the short historical notes and the ease of play'; 'In this circle **Peninsular War** was a success'; 'Not only did they enjoy it, but since most had never played such a creature, they were enticed by the prospect of more of these games'; 'To them, **Peninsular War** was a great introduction', 'In all the play sessions no two games were the same . . . among the novice testers this feature was the most attractive element that made them think of trying again – to see if there was a "better" solution'; 'For the less complex gamer or the novice, it is likely to be very welcome entertainment.'

Surely opinions like that deserve more than two stars?

4. The hex numbering system. This was the same as has been used for the last 16 years for **Railway Rivals**, with no problems! All it needs is the ability to count

up to five, and to know the letters of the alphabet (in my experience, *most* wargamers can manage both of these, though of course I cannot answer for the situation in Scotland). Surely you don't have to be a genius to realise that the row in between B and D is row C? Or that halfway between A1 and A5 is A3? What is 'strange, unhelpful and unnecessarily confusing' about that?

Still, after all that, there were some valid points in the review, which will be taken into account when the second edition is published. Thank you, Mr Simpson!

David Watts
Rostherne Games
Milford Haven, Dyfed SA73 2ED

Soft sport

I think your magazine is very good, but would it be possible to include more sports and solo games, and maybe do a special on computer games, concentrating on the lower micros?

R Barker
Folkestone, Kent CT19 5BA

Yes, yes, and maybe. Computer games of the more strategic kind are something we are considering covering, though we feel we'd have to use full colour, which is simply too expensive, to do justice to the subject. GI

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Yes, that's right. During the next month we will be donating £1 of every subscription received to Greenpeace.

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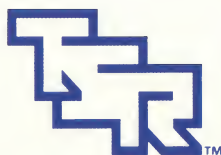
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